EatingWell

Where Good Taste Meets Good Health

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2015

30-MINUTE SIDES that Wow!

45 Delicious Holiday Recipes

CELEBRATION STRATEGIES

Skip the Extra Lbs.

Eggnog in a Pie? Oh Yeah!

PAGE 75

Glazed Roasted Delicata Squash
Page 61

DIY Gift Ideas

PAGE 8

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NOVEMBER/
DECEMBER

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This is the year to make easy the new holiday tradition. These sophisticated takes on everything from green beans to cranberry sauce keep time on your side.
BY HILARY MEYER

ON THE COVER: Glazed Roasted Delicata Squash (*page 61*)

The remote waters of Minnesota are home to wild rice, one of our few native foods that grow wild and are harvested commercially (*page 64*).

COVER (PEWTER PLATTER): LEIGH BEISCH; STYLING: DAN BECKER; GLENN JENKINS, (WHITE PLATTER): JIM WESTPHALEN; STYLING: JOANNE PALMISANO; STACY FRASER. THIS PAGE: SARA RUBINSTEIN

My Holiday Issues

When I moved across the country to work for *EatingWell* I brought a box of old food magazines with me. Most were *Gourmet* and *Bon Appétit*. That's what both my mom and grandma had always subscribed to, so I did too. *All* the issues were from November and December. I had ditched the other months long before the move. But those holiday issues, I couldn't part with.

Here's why: starting in early November I pored over food magazines, daydreamed about menus and marked pages with tiny scraps of paper that stuck out from the edges like flags. Each year the stack grew. Each year I would go back through the whole thing looking for recipes that I wanted to make again or might have overlooked. I knew the layouts inside and out. I had become attached to this pile of paper. All at once it represented the aspirations, anticipation and memories of great holiday gatherings.

Now that I've been on the other side of the page, creating rather than only subscribing, my perspective has changed. But my love for a holiday issue remains. Channeling back to those days of devouring piles of holiday food magazines, I wonder what I'd think if this issue of *EatingWell* landed in my mailbox and I was seeing it for the first time.

First up I'd mark that pear punch on page 40. I've got to make that for my mom. She's a major punch queen. Ooohhh, ham for Thanksgiving (*page 58*)! Love that idea! Wonder if I can get an uncured ham from the pig farmer I just met at the farmers' market. Eggnog pie (*page 80*)? Sounds like my kind of dessert. Hopefully I won't have to be in charge of dessert, but if I am that one's for me. Whoa! That wild rice pie with roasted fennel and garlic (*page 70*) looks amazing, perfect for Christmas morning...

Besides the recipes, I'd laugh out loud and maybe even cry a tad reading Rick Bragg's poignant essay on page 26 that perfectly sums up why cooking a big meal for friends and family is all worth it. Yes, this magazine would be happily at home in my pile of November and December issues. It's full of the promise of delicious holidays to come.

I'd love to hear what you're excited about (or not) in this issue—please email me at *editor@eatingwell.com*.

Cheers,

Jessie

Jessie Price

@jessieeatswell

We've partnered with Susan Rockefeller to host her new short documentary *Food For Thought, Food For Life*. Come to eatingwell.com/webextra to watch it and meet some of the farmers and chefs behind the sustainable-food movement.

HANNA WILLIAMS/OFFSET.COM; TOP LEFT: ERICA ALLEN; BOTTOM: COURTESY STONE BARNS

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Healthy, Happy Holidays!

We've got you covered with guides for great meals, foolproof recipes and tips for better health at *eatingwell.com/webextra*

WIN A **MIXER** and whip up some meringues!

(See the recipe on page 77.) Enter the sweepstakes for this mixer, which is the prize of the day on November 6.

eatingwell.com/WinMixer

NO PURCHASE NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN. Subject to Official Rules and entry at win.recipe.com/. There will be one Daily Giveaway Sweepstakes per day. Entries for each daily sweepstakes must be received by 11:59 p.m., E.T. Open to legal residents of the 50 United States, and the District of Columbia, 21 years or older. One entry per e-mail address per day. Online entry only. Void where prohibited. Sponsor: Meredith Corporation.

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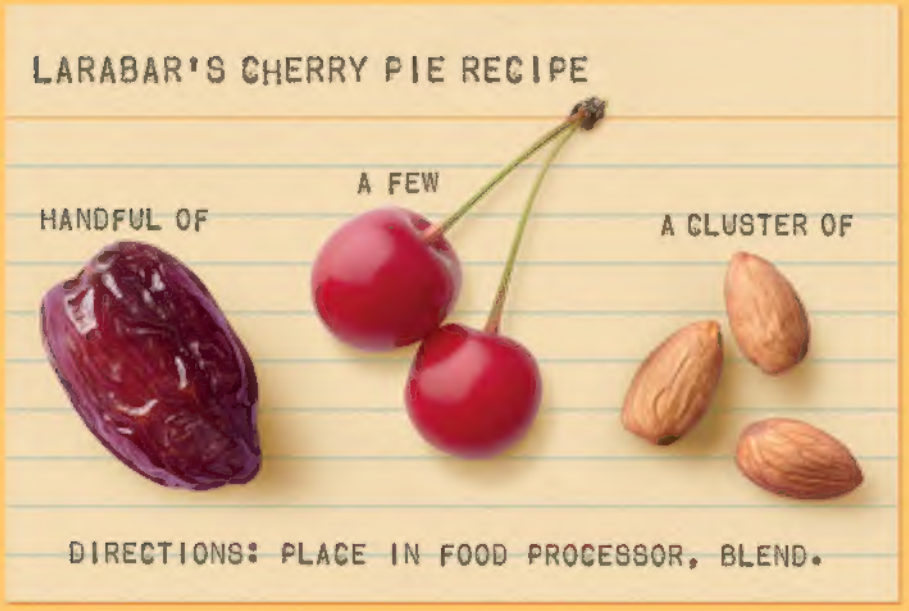

JUST THE STUFF THAT MATTERS.

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CALIFORNIA OLIVE OILS: WHY WE LOVE THIS LIQUID GOLD // PAGE 10

FRESH

Oyster Revival

This seafood is cleaning up the Chesapeake, which is cause for celebration

In the shallows of the Perrin River, a tributary of the Chesapeake Bay in Virginia, ruffle-shelled oysters grow in wire cages and feed on passing plankton in the water. For 20 years, Tommy Leggett of York River Oysters has planted and farmed beds containing 1 million oysters at a time in these quiet waters.

Through the 19th century, oysters practically paved the Chesapeake Bay—but overfishing, diseases and water pollution decimated the population. In 1996, oyster harvests in Virginia dropped below 18,000 bushels. Now, thanks to reef restoration and aquaculture programs for shellfish breeding and farming, they've rebounded to more than 500,000 bushels last year.

And that's critical, because oysters are living filters, crucial to the health of waterways that they clear of algae and sediments. Other marine animals take refuge in their reefs. A single oyster can flush up to 60 gallons of water a day, keeping the environment healthy for other marine life.

Leggett and other oyster entrepreneurs have embraced more sustainable practices, hand-cultivating fewer oysters instead of using the traditional method of dredging the bottom and taking large amounts of shellfish at a time. "When you take the oyster [by dredging], you're taking the habitat," Leggett says. His farming method preserves the wild species and reefs while producing new oysters.

Seafood Watch recommends both wild and farmed oysters as a sustainable choice. So get shucking and slurping—there are plenty of reasons to feel good about indulging in this briny bivalve. —*Carolyn Shapiro*

HOME SHUCKED
Get step-by-step instructions on how to shuck an oyster at eatingwell.com/webextra

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HEALTHY DIY by Hilary Meyer

Homemade Gifts
IN 4 EASY STEPS

1. MIX YOUR SPICES
2. FILL YOUR JARS
3. ADD RECIPE TAGS
4. TIE ON A BOW!

EACH RECIPE MAKES 1 CUP DRY MIX

Garlic & Chive
Combine 6 Tbsp. dried chives, 5 Tbsp. dried "chopped" garlic, 3 Tbsp. dried dill, 1 Tbsp. kosher salt and 1 tsp. ground pepper.

Spicy Indian
Combine 3 Tbsp. each ground coriander, ground cumin and dried cilantro, 2 Tbsp. each turmeric and crushed red pepper, 1 Tbsp. each ground ginger and kosher salt, 1 tsp. each ground fennel seed and ground pepper.

Crazy Herb
Combine 4 Tbsp. dried parsley, 3 Tbsp. each dried basil and oregano, 2 Tbsp. onion powder, 1 Tbsp. each celery seed, sugar and kosher salt, 2 tsp. ground pepper.

Turkish
Combine 6 Tbsp. paprika, 3 Tbsp. dried mint, 2 Tbsp. each cinnamon and garlic powder, 1 Tbsp. each ground cumin and kosher salt, 2 tsp. ground pepper, 1 tsp. ground cloves.

TAG IT! Download recipe gift tags at eatingwell.com/webextra

MAKE IT A DRESSING!
Shake 2 Tbsp. Mix with ½ cup olive oil, ⅓ cup vinegar and 2 Tbsp. water in a jar. Makes 1 cup. (130 cal. per 2-Tbsp. serving.)

MAKE IT A DIP!
Combine 2 Tbsp. Mix with ¾ cup plain Greek yogurt, ¼ cup sour cream and 2 Tbsp. olive oil. Makes 1 cup. (60 cal. per 2-Tbsp. serving.)

JIM WESTPHALEN, STYLING: STACY FRASER; JOANNE PALMISANO; LABEL: © LANAN/SHUTTERSTOCK. BOTTOM LEFT: © EDOMA/SHUTTERSTOCK

PET NUTRITION **"Is it OK for my pet to eat leftover holiday bones?"**

A dog chewing on a bone is iconic; however, the cons of giving bones to your pet outweigh the benefits. Bones can cause some pretty nasty health problems. Chicken and turkey bones become brittle when cooked and are likely to break into sharp pieces and cut your dog's lips, tongue—or even the esophagus, stomach or intestine, which can cause a potentially life-threatening illness. (Poor pup!)

Dogs commonly swallow large chunks of larger ham or beef bones whole, which may lead to an intestinal blockage that requires emergency surgery. And dogs can painfully damage or break their teeth chewing on bones and need dental surgery.

Raw bones are likely to be contaminated with harmful bacteria—such as *Salmonella* or *E. coli*, which can make your pet or even your human family sick (through contact and dog kisses).

At holiday time, a little bit of cooked meat or homemade dog cookie is a safer treat. Or opt for a festive chew toy instead.

—Cailin Heinze, VMD, MS, DACVN, @C_HeinzeVMD

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The olive trees in California are churning out liquid gold
By Lindsay Westley

The New Gold Rush

Albert Katz slowly works his way down neatly tended rows of olive trees as he fills his bucket with green fruit. Right now, he's picking the Leccino variety, an early-ripening olive with a spicy, grassy taste. These olives will be at the mill in a matter of a few hours, and this year, as always, he'll rush to catch the very first drop of the *olio nuovo*—or December's new oil—from the spigot, checking it for quality and fresh peppery notes.

In a few days, a panel of sensory experts up the road in Berkeley, California, will swirl, sniff, slurp and swallow their way through a sample of Katz's oil along with hundreds of others. A well-balanced oil will include notes of fruitiness, bitterness [illegible] sensation in the back of the throat after swallowing, is also a marker of freshness, as it indicates high levels of beneficial polyphenols.

The California Olive Oil Council (COOC) was founded in 1992 and Katz along with 12 other growers began churning out oil. Still, more than 95 percent of the olive oil in our cupboards is sourced from abroad—a statistic that Patricia Darragh, executive director of the COOC, is working hard to change.

Europe certainly makes stellar olive oils, but those bottles don't always get to the U.S. The industry has also had issues with fraud ("olive oil" cut with other vegetable oils) and misleading labels. The COOC seal—backed by tasting and lab testing—ensures you're getting 100 percent extra-virgin California olive oil.

Right now Katz and other growers are keeping a close eye on California's ongoing drought. Luckily, olive trees are able to survive dry years, and may even produce a more flavorful olive, so it could be a good year. "There's a reason olive trees live so long—they're very hard to kill," says Katz.

BOTTLES TO GIVE

We sniffed, swirled and sipped oils (plus coughed a bit—a sign of pungency) in the Test Kitchen. Our notes:

Frantoio Grove
Fiery, spicy, buttery.

Cobram Estate
Great bite, botanical.

Enzo Olive Oil Co.
Mild yet bold, smooth.

California Olive Ranch
Peppery, fruity, pungent.

Katz Olive Oil
Mildly pungent, peppery.

Lucero
Citrusy, bright, fruity.

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Find our recipe for Holiday Cranberry Cake at **floridacrystals.com**.

The Farm That Heals

For veterans, this farm does more than grow crops

By Jennifer Billock

On a small farm outside Chicago, active-duty soldiers and veterans are finding reprieve from the hardships of war. The Freedom Farm for Vets, founded by John Ress, is a 5-acre property with opportunities for vets to garden, work in a woodshop and take care of horses. Its mission is to alleviate post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) through farming and positive surroundings. "It calmed me down quite a bit," says Rob, a 30-year-old former Navy sonar technician who suffers from PTSD and asked that his last name not be used. "It helped me get my motor skills and memory back. And it keeps your mind off things." The farm acts as a safe haven for the 30 or so veterans and service members who come seeking shelter from the pressures of daily life and welcome the chance to get back in touch with nature.

Ress doesn't have a background in psychology, but grew up in a farming family. As a child, he watched his uncles return from war and saw how much farming helped them overcome the lasting effects. He started the nonprofit five years ago as a way to help others recover as his uncles had.

Ress greets every veteran and gets to know them. "John's kind of like a bartender psychologist, except he's a farmer psychologist," says Rob. In fact, the farm helped Rob so much that he's starting his own in Arizona, where he recently moved. "Farming is so beneficial for post-traumatic stress because veterans can see the progress in what they've done," Ress notes. "There's a direct correlation between planting and starting over in life. They plant the seed, they watch the seed start to grow, then they bear the fruit of what they did. It really is self-help."

CONNECTING VETS WITH FARMING ACROSS THE COUNTRY

NATIONAL

Farmer Veteran Coalition
farmvetco.org
Collaborates with the military and farming community on programs like Homegrown by Heroes, a label on products grown and produced by veterans.

NORTH CAROLINA

Veterans Healing Farm
veteranshealingfarm.org
This community farm, founded by former Air Force service member John Mahshie, is a place where veterans farm and form a new community at home.

COLORADO

Veterans to Farmers
veteranstofarmers.org
Trains veterans to start their own greenhouse business. Founder Buck Adams, a Marine Corps vet, has had over 300 participants.

WATCH THIS: *Food for Thought, Food for Life* is a documentary that reminds us why caring about where our food comes from is so important. See the 20-minute film at *eatingwell.com/webextra*

TODD WENTZ

We Love GREAT FOOD And Even Better CONVERSATION

The more we talk, the stronger our bonds become. It's the same approach we use when looking for solutions to grow food more sustainably. We work with experts from a variety of fields to develop solutions for farmers that help ensure better harvests. That way, more families can access a balanced meal. It's time for a bigger discussion about food.

Be part of the conversation at **Discover.Monsanto.com**

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SHOP SMART by Lisa D'Agrosa, M.S., R.D.

Yogurt: A Better Spoonful

Yogurt is packed with protein, probiotics and calcium—but if you pick the wrong ones, you'll be spooning up loads of calories and sugar too.

SCOPE THE SUGAR: Plain yogurt has a bit of natural sugar (from milk) but no added sugar. Flavored yogurts have as much as 15 grams of added sugar. To cut plain's tang, add fresh fruit or a teaspoon of maple syrup or honey (about 5 g sugar).

CHOOSE YOUR FAT LEVEL: Nonfat has the fewest calories but new research has linked eating full-fat dairy with lower body weight. Low-fat yogurts are a nice middle ground—they still have a rich texture and some fat, but slightly fewer calories.

PROBIOTIC POWER: Most yogurts have good-for-you bugs that can help keep your gut healthy. If you spot the "Live & Active Cultures" seal, it guarantees at least 100 million cultures per gram at manufacturing time.

OUR FAVES

Fage: The texture, tang and flavor nailed it for us. Plus, no fillers or additives here like in some brands of Greek-style yogurt.

Stonyfield Organic: It's a classic with a nice zip—and it's easy to find whether you're looking for nonfat, low-fat or whole-milk.

Siggi's: The flavors have far less sugar than others (about 4 grams of added sugar compared to the 12 to 16 grams in many brands).

Chobani Simply 100: A smidge of sugar, plus calorie-free monk fruit and stevia (read *more on page 19*) to help keep the calories down.

Noosa: This creamy yogurt wowed us. But at around 300 calories, it's a splurge. Eat half and save some for later, or try the 4-oz. size.

ASK THE NUTRITIONIST

"Will a gluten-free diet help my athletic performance?"

Many famous athletes, like tennis star Novak Djokovic, have recently gone gluten-free, claiming it boosts energy and

ence: according to a recent study, 40 per- cent of nonceliac athletes—recreational to Olympians—follow some form of gluten-

Despite the hype, research shows removing gluten isn't likely to make you a better athlete. A small study published by *Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise* found that among people who don't have celiac disease—an immune reaction to eating gluten—a gluten-free diet showed no improvement in performance or health.

In the study, cyclists followed almost the same healthy diet for two different 7-day periods. But one week, without them being aware, their twice-daily cereal bars had gluten.

At the end of each week, researchers evaluated the athletes' cycling. Eating gluten-free did not have benefits in athletic

and diarrhea) or perceived well-being.

So why are athletes convinced gluten-

"When going gluten-free, people make

ist Nancy Clark, M.S., R.D., C.S.S.D. "They stop eating as many processed foods."

THE BOTTOM LINE

Unless you have celiac disease, following a gluten-free diet won't help make you stronger and faster. What can? Healthy carbs and protein to fuel your muscles. But remember, everyone's different; if you find certain foods give you tummy troubles, or seem to slow you down, try

agree with your body.

Send your nutrition questions to Nutrition Editor **Brierley Wright, M.S., R.D.**, at askus@eatingwell.com

ERIC CAMDEN STYLING: STACY PARKER MOSLEY HAIR

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HEALTHY KITCHEN by Marissa Donovan, R.D

A HEALTHY POUR

Here's how to drink a little less without even realizing it. Cheers!

SEE RED

Picking red wine over white can help you **dole out 9% less,** since it's easier to see how much you've poured. Red wine is a good choice, too, because it contains more antioxidants than white

TAKE A BIRD'S EYE VIEW

Look at your glass from above as you pour and you'll **sip about 15 fewer calories.** Why? It appears more full from above than when you look at it from the side.

SHAPE MATTERS

People **pour 12% less** wine into taller, thinner white wine glasses compared to wider red wine glasses—even though both hold 10 ounces. The taller glass appears bigger, so you pour less.

Our favorite glass picks—for smaller pours without whining about less wine: Riedel Wine Series Cabernet/Merlot Glass; Schott Zwiesel White Wine Glass for Pier 1 *(shown)*

Balance Your Thanksgiving

Healthier turkey-day tricks to tip the scales in your favor

It's no surprise that we eat a lot at Thanksgiving—by one estimate 4,500 calories. And a whopping 1,500 of those calories are not from the big dinner, but from snacks and drinks.

Go ahead and enjoy your favorite holiday dishes (the ones you only get once a year), but to curb calorie overload, skip the foods you see more often and try to keep things reasonable for the rest of the day. Here's how:

Get movin'. Start your day with a Turkey Trot and after dinner take a walk around the neighborhood before dessert. In addition to burning calories, one study found that a brisk 15-minute walk decreased cravings for high-calorie sweets. So, still go for pie—but hopefully you'll slice a smaller piece.

Chew gum while you cook or chat. You'll be less likely to pick and nosh. Plus, researchers found that chewing gum between meals may help suppress appetite.

Move your meal earlier in the day. The sooner you eat Thanksgiving dinner, the less time there is for snacking before the big meal. Besides, research shows eating your biggest meal earlier in the day is better for maintaining a healthy weight.

Clean up! Don't shirk your way out of dish duty this year. You can burn about 115 calories in 30 minutes with "chores" like doing dishes and cleaning your counters. Bonus: if you vacuum and sweep before your guests arrive—235 calories per hour

ERIC ALLEN STYLING; MOLLY HELT LIPPERT; GARY TROTT

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Hide & Go Sweet

By Joyce Hendley

Photos by Karla Conrad

CAN YOU SPOT THE NO-CAL SWEETENERS HIDDEN IN THIS PICTURE?

Maybe you think you don't use sugar substitutes. Maybe you steer clear of diet sodas and "lite" foods to avoid chemicals like aspartame. But if you've eaten certain high-fiber cereals, salad dressings, frozen entrees—or even sipped some nondiet iced teas—then you've probably consumed a lot more of them than you realize. And your odds are only growing: sugar substitute use in packaged foods has been rising steadily for the past decade—the amount in our food supply now tops 26 pounds per person annually. And the global market for sugar substitutes (including both artificial and natural no-calorie sweeteners) is expected to grow—topping $18 billion by 2019.

Not only are these sweet nothings cropping up in more and more foods—there are also more sugar substitute options, *period*. With today's consumers clamoring for "clean" ingredients lists,

food-and-drink makers are increasingly turning to "natural" plant-based sweeteners. Trending now are products using stevia leaf extract and monk fruit extract (from an Asian melon), as well as erythritol, a sugar alcohol found in certain fruits. Other next-generation sweeteners that *are* artificial, like advantame and neotame, have also recently come on board. (*Read more on page 22.*)

Many of these sugar substitutes—both new and old—have spurred a lot of concerns and confusion: Are alternative sweeteners needed weapons against the ills caused by our overly sweetened lifestyles? Or are they the toxic, junk-food additives their detractors believe them to be? Here's our take on your biggest sugar substitute questions, based on the latest research.

Can Sugar Substitutes Help You Lose Weight?

Yes—but only a little.

A small but strong handful of clinical trials suggest that using sugar substitutes—usually in the form of diet beverages—can help people lose weight, especially those "who are getting a fairly prudent diet already," according to obesity expert Barry Popkin, Ph.D., a professor of nutrition at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. One major review involving more than 1,900 participants concluded that when sugar substitutes and low-calorie foods were swapped in for their full-calorie counterparts, people lost an average of 1 to 2 pounds.

Another study found that when 31 men and women snacked on crackers with sweetened cream cheese before lunch and dinner, they felt just as satisfied when the cream cheese was sweetened with stevia or aspartame as they did with sugar, despite taking in around 300 fewer calories.

That said, large, long-term studies show that people who regularly consume sugar substitutes aren't leaner—and are sometimes heavier—than those who don't. Why the discrepancy? One factor is what Popkin calls, "the Big Mac with a Diet Coke" effect—the all-too-human self-foolery that happens when we eat something labeled "diet," then feel entitled to pig out because we were "good." Overweight people also tend to choose more diet foods in general to prevent further gain.

Bottom line? If you use sugar substitutes wisely—swapping them for their full-on-sugar counterparts, and keeping the rest of your diet sensible—they may make your weight-loss journey a little sweeter. "But they're never going to be a magic bullet," says Popkin.

TAME YOUR Sweet Tooth

There's plenty of evidence that your taste for sweet can be "unlearned"—and that your palate will adjust to prefer lower levels of it in a matter of weeks. Here are some helpful tips:

Eyeball the ingredients list (not just the nutrition label). Look for caloric sweeteners like high-fructose corn syrup as well as noncaloric ones, such as sucralose. If you spot more than a few of them, ditch it for a similar item with less sweeteners.

Eliminate sweetened foods like bread and pasta sauce that shouldn't be sweet in the first place. They're easiest to cut because you won't miss the sugar (real or not) as much.

Go halfsies. Take down the sweet factor of products like yogurt and cereal by mixing your usual version half-and-half with a no-added-sugar kind—then gradually increase the amount of the better-for-you stuff until you've come to prefer it all that way.

Do Alternative Sweeteners Amp Up Your Taste for Sweet?

Not any more than sugar does.

We already have a hard-wired love of sweetness, and health advocates say that with so much added sugar in our food supply—even in things like crackers and ketchup—many of us have become used to a higher level of it. With sugar substitutes, which are often hundreds—sometimes thousands—of times sweeter than sugar, some experts worry they'll flood our sweet taste receptors, causing us to crave ever-stronger amounts of sugariness, and make naturally sweet, nutritious foods, like fresh fruit, seem dull by comparison.

Of course, foods sweetened by sugar substitutes aren't hundreds or thousands of times sweeter than the regular stuff. And concerns about them creating a super-sweet tooth don't hold up to scientific scrutiny. One study Popkin co-authored found that when overweight people swapped their usual two daily servings of sugar-sweetened beverages with diet drinks or water for six months, the diet group took in, on average, about 40 fewer calories from desserts and added sweeteners than the water group. "The study pokes a hole in the idea that people who drink diet beverages have an increased preference for sweet tastes," says Popkin.

Do They Screw Up Your Microbiome?

Possibly, yes.

Last year, a study at Israel's Weizmann Institute found that mice fed a fairly high daily dose of saccharin, sucralose or aspartame for 11 weeks began to develop symptoms of glucose intolerance, a precursor to diabetes. Suspecting gut bacteria (the "microbiome") might be involved, the researchers did further testing using saccharin, the sweetener that had the biggest effect—and discovered changes in the mice's gut bacteria that are associated with a high risk of obesity and diabetes.

To see if something similar might happen in humans, the team then recruited seven healthy, lean volunteers—none of whom normally consumed artificial sweeteners—and fed them a daily dose of saccharin that was high, but within the FDA's acceptable limit. (Equivalent to 10 packets of Sweet'N Low.) After a week, four volunteers developed glucose intolerance, and their gut bacteria shifted toward those linked to obesity and diabetes.

The study generated major buzz, "but as impressive as it is, it's only one study," notes Justin Sonnenburg, Ph.D., an assistant professor of microbiology and immunology at Stanford University School of Medicine, and co-author of *The Good Gut*. "It does reinforce that what we eat directly impacts our health and our gut microbiota—that's incredibly clear."

Ultimately, though, experts say there's a bigger-picture issue here—beyond whether sugar substitutes are good or bad for us. The real problem is the sheer amount of sweet stuff *of any kind* in our food supply—a whopping 140 pounds' worth annually for every adult in the U.S. So making an effort to cut down on sugar (real and fake) is a smart idea. (*See "Tame Your Sweet Tooth," above.*) We're not saying life can't be sweet—on occasion, sugar substitutes are fine—but they aren't necessarily the better choice, for your health or your waistline.

JOYCE HENDLEY *is an award-winning nutrition and science writer*

STYLING: KEN CARLSON. ANNIE PETERSEN

This coffee was sweetened with stevia, a plant-based sugar substitute.
Low-sugar versions of a product may signal hidden sweeteners, like in this granola.
Some English muffins—even the whole-wheat kind—contain sucralose.
This low-cal breakfast syrup is artificially sweetened. Pass the Grade A maple, please.

MORE SURPRISING NONDIET SOURCES

In addition to our sweet breakfast buffet, here's a handful of other foods and beverages that sugar substitutes have snuck their way into.

HIGH-FIBER BREAKFAST CEREAL (Sucralose & Acesulfame K): Ironically, even within the same brand you'll find some cereals that contain sugar substitutes like these and some that don't.

REGULAR BOTTLED ICED TEA (Acesulfame K & Sucralose): Yes, we're talking nondiet iced tea here—often the fruit-flavored ones. The *actual* diet versions of these teas just have more of these fake sugars. Choose the plain, unsweetened type instead, and toss in a few slices of real fruit to punch up the flavor.

NONDIET GINGER ALE (Sucralose): One brand we encountered contained both high-fructose corn syrup *and* sucralose. A 12-oz. can would deliver artificial sweetener and 4½ teaspoons of actual sugar

MICROWAVE KETTLE CORN (Sucralose): It's low-fat and contains zero sugars—but keep looking if you want zero sucralose, too.

LIGHT AND FAT-FREE ITALIAN DRESSINGS (Stevia): Here's a case where you might want to go full-fat. Regular dressings tend to use fewer sweeteners of any kind than light or lower-fat types.

FROZEN BBQ CHICKEN BREAST PIECES (Sucralose): The honey part sounded wholesome enough, but read farther down the ingredients list and—hello, faux!

TOASTED COCONUT ALMONDS (Rebiana): The brand we spied contained sugar, brown sugar *and* stevia. We're all for almonds, but this is sweetness overkill.

FIZZY VITAMIN DRINK MIX PACKETS (Stevia Leaf Extract): Along with a boatload of healthifying vitamins, you're also getting this plant-based sugar substitute in many of the fruit flavors of one popular manufacturer's fizzy packets. It's just more proof that you have to read those labels—even on "good-for-you" items!

AT-A-GLANCE GUIDE

Sugar Substitutes

Here's a rundown of some FDA-cleared sweeteners—which have also earned the go-ahead from major health organizations, like the American Heart Association. To get FDA approval, manufacturers must submit dozens of tests to prove safety, and establish maximum intake levels (called Acceptable Daily Intake, or ADI). However, some groups, like the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI), question the quality of these studies, which are usually conducted by the manufacturers themselves, or companies they hire. (*See "The Scoop," below.*) A handful of sweeteners, such as stevia leaf extract, are classified by the FDA as GRAS: Generally Recognized as Safe. Even though "natural" sugar substitutes like these are often perceived as healthier options, GRAS sugar substitutes usually don't have as much safety data as approved additives. And with the science changing all the time, it's worth using any of them sparingly.

SUGAR SUBSTITUTE	REGULATORY STATUS	ADI FOR ADULTS (NUMBER OF PACKETS)	WHERE YOU'LL FIND IT	THE SCOOP
ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS				
Aspartame ■ *NutraSweet* ■ *Equal* ■ *SugarTwin*	FDA-approved additive	75 packets	America's most common artificial sweetener, found in drinks, tabletop sweeteners, yogurt, candy, desserts, gum and medicines.	Some 200 times sweeter than sugar, a little aspartame goes a long way. It's one of the most widely studied sweeteners, but CSPI advises steering clear—citing data that hint at a slightly increased cancer risk in men, and rat studies linking it to leukemia and lymphoma. (The FDA disagrees.)
Acesulfame Potassium ■ *Sweet One* ■ *Sunett*	FDA-approved additive	23 packets	Drinks, desserts, yogurt, candy, chewing gum, tabletop sweeteners. Often blended with other sugar substitutes to overcome its sometimes bitter aftertaste.	Detractors of "Ace-K" say a few of the original animal studies submitted for FDA approval that ruled out cancer risk should be redone because of flaws. Proponents cite 30-plus years of use in the U.S. and Europe, with no reports of serious health effects.
Saccharin ■ *Sweet'N Low* ■ *Sugar Twin* ■ *Necta Sweet* ■ *Equal Saccharin*	FDA-approved additive	45 packets	Tabletop sweeteners, "diet" or "light" foods like jams or candies, and medicines. Also used in fountain versions of diet sodas (to improve stability of sweet taste).	Saccharin has a pronounced bitter aftertaste some hate and others crave. It was threatened with a ban in the 1970s when a few studies linked it to bladder cancer in rats. The National Institutes of Health later deemed the studies irrelevant because rats' cancer-development mechanism's different from humans. Still, CSPI urges avoidance, claiming cancer risk can't be fully ruled out.
Sucralose ■ *Splenda* ■ *Equal Sucralose*	FDA-approved additive	23 packets	Tabletop sweeteners and many foods and beverages—including salad dressings, microwave kettle corn, pickles, and English muffins.	Derived from sugar, sucralose has a "cleaner" sugar taste, according to fans. And it's calorie-free because our bodies don't break it down. While 100-plus studies confirm sucralose's safety, some question whether its increasing use might expose children to amounts higher than the ADI, due to their smaller size. A 45-pound kid could hit their ADI with just two 12-ounce sodas.
Neotame ■ *Newtame*	FDA-approved additive	23 packets	Not yet in wide commercial use. (Its extreme sweetness tends to linger, making it a challenge for food manufacturers.)	Neotame is a derivative of two amino acids that has 7,000 to 13,000 times the sweetening power of sugar. CSPI considers it a safe choice, since the amounts used will likely be microscopic.
"NATURAL" SWEETENERS				
Stevia Leaf Extract *(Rebiana)* ■ *Truvia* ■ *PureVia* ■ *SweetLeaf* ■ *OnlySweet* ■ *Stevia in the Raw*	FDA GRAS status	9 packets	Tabletop sweeteners (also sold in blends with sugar, such as PureVia or Born Sweet Zing, at 8 to 10 calories per teaspoon).	Coveted as a natural alternative sweetener, this no-cal extract from the leafy, green stevia plant has a licorice-y, slightly bitter aftertaste, so it often appears in blends. The FDA has only approved highly purified stevia extracts (Rebaudioside A, or Reb A) for use as sweeteners, because safety data is lacking on whole-leaf stevia's effects on the cardiovascular, urinary and reproductive systems. Whole stevia leaves, or products containing "crude stevia extracts" or "whole leaf stevia"—which are sold at some health-food stores—are not approved by the FDA.
Monk Fruit Extract *(Luo Han Guo)* ■ *Monk Fruit in the Raw* ■ *Purefruit*	FDA GRAS status	Not specified	Monk Fruit in the Raw is available as a packaged sweetener; monk fruit extract can be found in a few foods and beverages, like no-sugar-added fruit cups, sparkling fruit beverages and some cereals.	Extracted from the juice of an Asian subtropical melon, it has a slightly fruity taste, so it's often blended with other sweeteners to mute the flavor. Though the extract has not been extensively tested, the fruit has a long history of consumption in China, where it's used medicinally to help soothe colds and sore throats.
SUGAR ALCOHOLS				
Erythritol ■ *ZSweet*	FDA GRAS status	Not specified	Sugar-free candies, cookies and chewing gums, packaged sweeteners. Often blended with other sugar substitutes.	Sugar alcohols are calorie-free carbohydrates that are chemically identical to those found naturally in some fruits. Erythritol measures similarly to sugar and has a real sugar texture. And it's the least likely of all the sugar alcohols to cause stomach upset. Xylitol can have—ahem—laxative effects at higher doses, like most sugar alcohols.
Xylitol ■ *XyloSweet*	FDA-approved additive	Not applicable	Sugar-free candies, cookies and chewing gums, tabletop sweetener	

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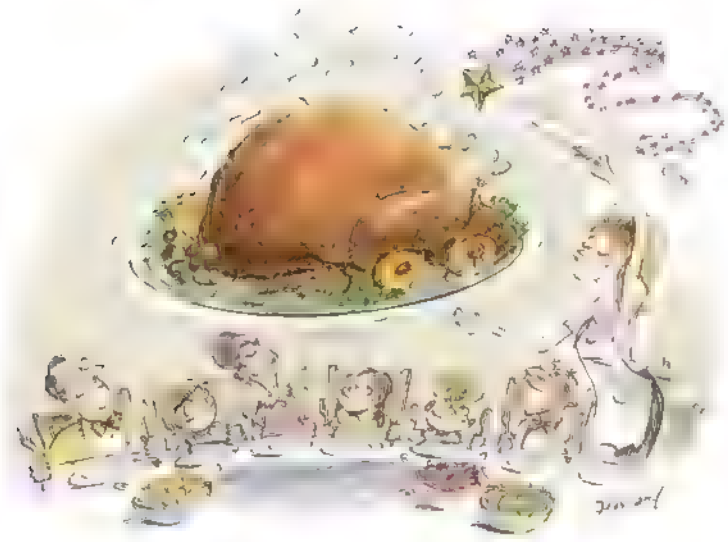

The Magic Turkey

The holidays turn turkey special, no *abracadabra* required By Rick Bragg

I believed in all sorts of miracles as a child. I almost wore out a bicycle, racing rainbows to a pot of gold that usually just turned out to be a mud hole or a chicken house. I believed that Santa Claus rode all the world over in a sleigh, even though we hadn't seen snow since the Eisenhower administration and the only sleigh I ever really saw was towed by a tractor in the Christmas parade. But the miracle I believed in most, the one I knew to be real and true, was the magic turkey.

The plastic-wrapped bird we brought home from the grocery store, denuded and frozen hard as Stone Mountain, had nothing whatever to do with the millions of lesser turkeys that were consumed over the holidays by other people, or the billions of turkeys consumed throughout the rest of the year in the entire turkey-eating world.

Our holiday turkey, whether Thanksgiving or Christmas or both, was magic.

Maybe I had better explain.

I do not love turkey, most of the time. I believe, deep in my heart, that no one really does. In the deli, it is what we order because of self-loathing, because we feel we do not deserve ham. Turkey, I believe, would not even exist in the marketplace if it were not for wannabe vegans who lack the courage of their conviction to exist on tofu and burgers pressed out of black beans and grade-school paste.

I ate turkey bacon once. I am still so ashamed it's a wonder I don't go to a dark room and whip myself. On the speaking circuit, which I do because talking is easier than writing, we sometimes have what is called a turkey roll, a substance that I suspect may have been contrived by the chemists at Firestone. Once, when I was reporting overseas, I sat down with some grim military rations. I tried to swap my turkey surprise for another delicacy, like freeze-dried beef, but found that I could not have traded it for a clod of dirt.

My point is, it takes the most festive time of year to transform such a bland thing—really, the station wagon of meat—into something that makes life better, even joyous. It begins, of course, with a cool breeze. I am a Southern man, born into a perpetual summer. But along about Thanksgiving, a blessed cold sifts through the pines. And the drugstores start marking down Halloween candy 40 percent, which is why—I finally figured out—Santa filled our stockings with chocolate witches and taffy wrapped in orange and black.

We never knew for sure if we were going to have turkey once or twice during the holidays. We'd have to wait. And waiting is hard. But then, one morning, Momma would ask, nonchalant, as if such a thing happened every day, "Hon, you want to go with me to get the turk—"

I would already be in the car. It's a wonder I was not holding a knife and fork. My happiness has always been centered around my belly button. I would almost levitate over the cracked asphalt of the grocery-store parking lot.

And there, in a rock-hard pile, rested our magic turkey. It was even more magic because it was free; most employers were too cheap to offer a holiday bonus, so they gave their workers a coupon for a free fowl. Sometimes, she let me carry it out. I dropped it once, to my horror. There is nothing sadder in this world than a magic turkey rolling fast downhill past the Piggly Wiggly.

In her kitchen, it would be prepared with love and skill, and come from the oven dripping in butter and specked with black pepper but never stuffed with anything. We do not stuff. The very idea of it is barbaric. We have cornbread dressing, from a pan. It is why no one has died of *Salmonella* down here since Wallace was governor the last time.

But none of this is why it's magic. It is magic because my people, the working people of the foothills of the Appalachians, will gather around it in something close to joy, even pray over it. They will never see Paris unless there is another world war. The only cruise we take is when we set the control to 75 on the Chevrolet Silverado on the interstate to Birmingham. No, this is our best day, turkey day.

Magic.

RICK BRAGG *is a Pulitzer Prize winner whose latest book is* My Southern Journey: True Stories from the Heart of the South.

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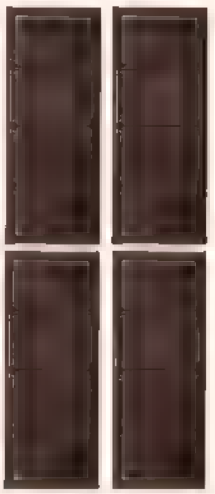

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WEEKNIGHTS

5 QUICK SKILLET SUPPERS

Steak with Glazed Carrots & Turnips, p. 30

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KARA CONRAD STYLING AT 2 JOES MANAGE MEDIA FOOD STYLING AT THE PROP STUDIO HOPE

[illegible]

ACTIVE: 30 MIN **TOTAL:** 30 MIN

[illegible] corned beef from the deli

SERVE WITH [illegible]

[illegible] grated medium onion
[illegible] medium
[illegible] egg
[illegible] egg white
[illegible] all-purpose flour
[illegible] ground pepper
¼ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon baking powder
4 cups precooked shredded potatoes (1 pound; *see Tip, below*)
½ cup diced deli corned beef (4 ounces)
3 tablespoons canola oil, divided

[illegible] several layers of paper towels. Gather up the edges and squeeze out as much liquid as possible.

[illegible] egg white in a large bowl. Whisk in flour, pepper, salt and baking powder [illegible] and corned beef to combine.

3. Preheat oven to 200°F.

[illegible] large cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat. Reduce heat to me[illegible] the potato mixture to the pan. Press with the back of a spatula [illegible] cook until crispy and golden, 3 to 4 minutes per side. [illegible] and keep warm in the oven. Repeat with two more batches of the [illegible] adding the heat as necessary.

[illegible] EATKES EACH
[illegible]ries 391, Fat 24g (sat 8g), Cholesterol [illegible]53g, Total sugars 5g [illegible] 13g, Fiber 2g, Sodium 633mg, Potassium [illegible]

HOT POTATO
Skip frozen and use partially cooked, shredded potatoes found in the refrigerated produce section or dairy section of most supermarkets. Or boil potatoes until they can just be pierced with a fork but are not completely tender. Let cool slightly, then shred.

Steak with Glazed Carrots & Turnips

ACTIVE: 30 MIN **TOTAL:** 40 MIN

This recipe has what it takes to transform steak and vegetables from basic to brilliant: a pop of rosemary on the steak, an intense sear in a hot skillet and a sweet-and-sour glaze on the vegetables. SERVE WITH *Sautéed spinach.* (Photo, page 29)

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 pound small carrots (about 5 inches long), halved lengthwise
- 1 pound turnips (about 3 medium), peeled and cut into thick matchsticks
- ¾ teaspoon salt, divided
- ¾ teaspoon ground pepper, divided
- 1 pound sirloin *or* top round steak, about 1 inch thick, trimmed
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh rosemary *or* ½ teaspoon dried
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon red-wine vinegar

1. Preheat oven to 450°F.

2. Heat 1 tablespoon oil and butter in a large cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat. Add carrots and turnips, sprinkle with ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper and cook, stirring occasionally, until starting to brown and soften, 8 to 10 minutes. Transfer to a plate.

3. Meanwhile, cut steak in half crosswise and sprinkle with rosemary and the remaining ½ teaspoon each salt and pepper. Heat the remaining 1 tablespoon oil in the pan over medium-high heat until very hot. Add the steak and cook until starting to brown on each side, about 2 minutes total. Transfer to another plate.

4. Return the vegetables to the pan and stir in brown sugar. Place the steak on the vegetables. Carefully transfer the pan to the oven.

5. Roast until the vegetables are tender and the steak is cooked to your desired doneness, 8 to 10 minutes for medium. Remove the steak to a clean cutting board and let rest 5 minutes before slicing. Drizzle vinegar over the vegetables. Serve the steak with the vegetables.

SERVES 4: 3 OZ. STEAK & 1 CUP VEGETABLES EACH
Calories 328, Fat 15g (sat 5g), Cholesterol 67mg, Carbs 25g, Total sugars 16g (added 7g), Protein 24g, Fiber 5g, Sodium 639mg, Potassium 880mg.

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GO LEAN
If you can't find lean ground pork, pulse chunks of pork tenderloin or loin in your food processor until coarsely ground.

Cornbread-Topped Chili Casserole

ACTIVE: 25 MIN **TOTAL:** 45 MIN

In this recipe that's also sometimes called tamale pie, the cornbread gets crusty at the edges, thanks to the cast-iron skillet. For the best texture, use yellow cornmeal with a medium grind. SERVE WITH *Lime wedges for a little extra zest.*

- 4 tablespoons canola oil, divided
- 2 cups chopped onion
- 3 tablespoons chili powder
- 1 pound lean ground pork (*see Tip, above*)
- 2 cups diced zucchini
- ½ teaspoon salt, divided
- ½ teaspoon ground pepper, divided
- 2 cups corn kernels, fresh or frozen (thawed)
- 1 14-ounce can diced tomatoes
- 1½ cups stone-ground cornmeal
- ¾ teaspoon baking powder
- 1 large egg
- 1 cup buttermilk

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Heat 2 tablespoons oil in a large cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion and chili powder; cook, stirring, until starting to soften, about 2 minutes. Add pork, zucchini and ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper and cook, stirring often, until the pork is no longer pink, 4 to 5 minutes. Add corn and tomatoes with their juice and cook until heated through, 3 to 4 minutes more. Remove from heat.
3. Meanwhile, whisk cornmeal, baking powder and the remaining ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper in a medium bowl. Whisk egg, buttermilk and the remaining 2 tablespoons oil in another bowl. Stir the buttermilk mixture into the cornmeal mixture until combined. Spread the batter over the pork and vegetables. Transfer the pan to the oven.
4. Bake until the cornbread is just cooked through, 15 to 20 minutes.

SERVES 5 **ABOUT** 1½ **CUPS EACH**

Calories 491, Fat 21g (sat 4g), Cholesterol 92mg, Carbs 55g, Total sugars 12g (added 0g), Protein 28g, Fiber 8g, Sodium 670mg, Potassium 999mg

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Middle Eastern Chicken & Chickpea Stew

ACTIVE: 35 MIN. **TOTAL:** 35 MIN.

TO MAKE AHEAD: Cover and refrigerate for up to 3 days.

Chicken gets great flavor from cumin, lemon juice

SERVE WITH *couscous and steamed broccoli*

- 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- ½ teaspoon salt, divided
- ¼ cup lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- ½ teaspoon ground pepper
- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts, trimmed, cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 large yellow onion, chopped
- 1 14-ounce can no-salt-added diced tomatoes
- 1 15-ounce can chickpeas, rinsed
- ½ cup chopped flat-leaf parsley

1. Mash garlic and ½ teaspoon salt on a cutting board with the back of a fork until a paste forms. Transfer to a medium bowl and whisk in lemon juice, cumin, paprika and pepper. Add chicken and stir to coat.

2. Heat oil in a large cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat. Add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until golden brown, 6 to 8 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the chicken to the pan (reserve the marinade) and cook, stirring occasionally, until opaque on the outside, about 4 minutes. Add tomatoes with their juice, chickpeas, the reserved marinade and the remaining ¼ teaspoon salt. Reduce heat to medium and cook, stirring occasionally, until the chicken is cooked through, 5 to 7 minutes more. Serve sprinkled with parsley.

SERVES 4: 1¼ CUPS EACH

Calories 268, Fat 8g (sat 1g), Cholesterol 63mg, Carbs 22g, Total sugars 4g (added 0g), Protein 28g, Fiber 5g, Sodium 613mg, Potassium 551mg

HEAVY METAL Cooking in cast iron can increase a dish's iron content—particularly when the recipe contains acidic foods like tomatoes and citrus.

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ALEXIA

Cauliflower & Kale Frittata

ACTIVE: 45 MIN **TOTAL:** 45 MIN

Crazy for cauliflower? Try it along with kale (or your favorite greens) in this satisfying frittata. Serve with A green salad with Sherry-Walnut Vinaigrette (eatingwell.com).

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 small onion, sliced
- 2 cups small cauliflower florets
- ¼ cup water
- 5 cups chopped kale
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
- ½ teaspoon salt, divided
- ½ teaspoon ground pepper, divided
- 8 large eggs
- ½ teaspoon smoked paprika
- ½ cup crumbled goat cheese *or* shredded Manchego cheese

1. Position a rack in upper third of oven; preheat broiler to high.

2. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in a large cast-iron skillet over medium heat. Add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until starting to brown, 2 to 4 minutes. Add cauliflower and water. Cover and cook until just tender, about 6 minutes. Add kale, garlic, thyme and ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper; cook, stirring often, until the kale is wilted, 2 to 3 minutes.

3. Whisk eggs, paprika and the remaining ¼ teaspoon salt and pepper in a large bowl. Add the vegetables to the egg mixture; gently stir to combine. Wipe the pan clean; add the remaining 1 tablespoon oil and heat over medium heat. Pour in the egg mixture and top with cheese. Cover and cook until the edges are set and the bottom is brown, 4 to 5 minutes.

4. Transfer the pan to the oven and broil until the top of the frittata is just cooked, 2 to 3 minutes.

SERVES 4: ¼ FRITTATA EACH

Calories 324, Fat 22g (sat 7g), Cholesterol 383mg, Carbs 13g, Total sugars 2g (added 0g), Protein 21g, Fiber 3g, Sodium 555mg, Potassium 778mg.

SMART SWAP
Use cauliflower instead of potatoes as in this frittata, and, cup for cup, you save 106 calories and 26g carbs.

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IN SEASON

With va-va-voom curves and the juiciest perfumy flesh imaginable, pears elevate your entertaining. Here are 4 irresistible recipes.

The Voluptuous Pear

...a gentle press of your thumb. ...to its firm apple cousins, ...there's even more to embrace with ...winter fruit. Just one medium pear ...a quarter of your recommended daily allowance for fiber—even more than an apple—which helps you fill up and "maintain not gain" this holiday season. Try them as a natural sweetener for punch, a fresh crostini topping or just take a juicy bite. Any way you swing them, it's all about those curves.

—Breana Lai, M.P.H., R.D.

BONUS RECIPES!
Find more festive pear recipes at eatingwell.com/webextra

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Pear-Rum Punch

ACTIVE: 15 MIN. **TOTAL:** 2¼ HRS (INCLUDING CHILLING TIME)

TO MAKE AHEAD: Refrigerate pear puree for up to 1 day.

Pureed ripe pears naturally sweeten the fruity base for this punch. For garnish, cut very thin whole slices from small pears and lay them on top.

PEAR PUREE

- 3 medium ripe pears, peeled and chopped
- ¾ cup water
- ¼ cup sugar

PUNCH

- 1 750-mL bottle chilled sparkling wine, such as Prosecco
- ½ cup dark rum
- 4 cups ice, plus more for serving
- Thinly sliced pears for garnish
- Pomegranate seeds for garnish

1. To make pear puree: Combine chopped pears, water and sugar in a medium saucepan; bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until the pears are soft, about 5 minutes. Carefully transfer to a blender. Puree until smooth. Refrigerate until cold, about 2 hours or up to 1 day.

2. To prepare punch: Combine the pear puree, sparkling wine and rum in a punch bowl or pitcher. Add ice. Garnish with pear slices and pomegranate seeds, if desired. Serve over ice, if desired.

SERVES 8: ABOUT ¾ CUP EACH

Calories 166, Fat 0g (sat 0g), Cholesterol 0mg, Carbs 18g, Total sugars 13g (added 6g), Protein 1g, Fiber 2g, Sodium 4mg, Potassium 79mg.

UNSPIKE IT!
For a nonalcoholic punch, replace the sparkling wine with plain seltzer and the rum with pomegranate juice.

Pear & Camembert Crostini

ACTIVE: 20 MIN. **TOTAL:** 20 MIN.

TO MAKE AHEAD: Refrigerate cooled crostini (Steps 1–2) airtight for up to 1 day.

Up your hors d'oeuvres game with these fruit-topped cheesy crostini. Warm preserves on the pears give them a shiny glaze and prevent them from browning.

- 12 diagonal slices whole-grain baguette (½ inch thick)
- Olive oil cooking spray
- 12 slices Camembert or Brie cheese (¼-inch, about 3 ounces)
- 1 medium firm ripe pear, cut into 24 slices
- 2 tablespoons apricot or plum preserves, warmed
- 1 cup watercress or arugula
- Freshly ground pepper to taste

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.

2. Arrange baguette slices on a baking sheet and coat both sides with cooking spray. Bake, turning once, until toasted, 10 to 12 minutes. Top each with a slice of cheese. Bake until the cheese is melted, about 2 minutes more.

3. Top each crostini with 2 pear slices, brush with preserves and top with greens and a generous grinding of pepper.

SERVES 12: 1 CROSTINI EACH

Calories 90, Fat 2g (sat 1g), Cholesterol 5mg, Carbs 15g, Total sugars 3g (added 1g), Protein 4g, Fiber 2g, Sodium 159mg, Potassium 43mg.

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Warm Pear & Spinach Salad with Maple-Bacon Vinaigrette

ACTIVE: 15 MIN. **TOTAL:** 15 MIN.

Sturdy large-leaved spinach holds up better to the warm bacon vinaigrette than baby spinach does. If you use baby spinach, wilt the spinach with the dressing and cool before tossing it with the salad.

- 10 cups fresh spinach, tough stems removed
- 1 medium firm ripe pear, thinly sliced
- ½ cup slivered red onion
- 2 slices bacon, chopped
- 1-1½ tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 1 tablespoon pure maple syrup
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground pepper
- ½ cup toasted walnut halves

1. Combine spinach, pear and onion in a large bowl.
2. Cook bacon in a small skillet over medium heat until crisp, 5 to 7 minutes. Transfer to a plate with a slotted spoon. Add enough oil to the pan drippings to make 2 tablespoons total. Add vinegar, syrup, salt and pepper; bring to a simmer. Immediately pour the dressing over the salad and gently toss to coat. Serve sprinkled with the bacon and walnuts.

SERVES 4, ABOUT 2 CUPS EACH

Calories 194, Fat 15g (sat 2g), Cholesterol 3mg, Carbs 16g, Total sugars 9g (added 3g), Protein 6g, Fiber 4g, Sodium 178mg, Potassium 580mg

KEEP IT FIRM
For a pear that will hold its shape in a salad, look for sweet yet firm Concorde or Seckel pears.

Pear-Pecan Cheese Ball

ACTIVE: 15 MIN. **TOTAL:** 1¼ HRS (INCLUDING 1 HR CHILLING TIME)

TO MAKE AHEAD: Prepare through Step 2 and refrigerate for up to 2 days. Sweet, tender pear, sharp Cheddar cheese and crunchy pecans make this cheese ball a holiday favorite. Serve with an assortment of sturdy crackers and crisp pear slices.

- 8 ounces reduced-fat cream cheese, softened
- ½ cups shredded extra-sharp Cheddar cheese
- medium firm ripe pear, finely chopped
- 2 scallion, white and green separated, finely chopped
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground pepper
- ½ cup finely chopped toasted pecans

1. Stir cream cheese, Cheddar, pear, scallion white, salt and pepper together in a medium bowl.
2. Coat a large piece of plastic wrap with cooking spray. Scoop the cheese mixture onto it. Using the plastic wrap to help you, form the cheese mixture into a ball, then completely wrap in plastic. Refrigerate for at least 1 hour and up to 2 days.
3. Just before serving, combine pecans and the reserved scallion greens in a shallow dish. Roll the cheese ball in the mixture, pressing to adhere.

SERVES 24, 2 TBSP. EACH

Calories 63, Fat 5g (sat 3g), Cholesterol 13mg, Carbs 2g, Total sugars 1g (added 0g), Protein 3g, Fiber 0g, Sodium 117mg, Potassium 47mg.

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MARKET PICK

Thanks to well-managed waters in the Pacific, versatile, mild cod is a sustainable choice for quick dinners

Good Catch

SUSTAINABLE SMARTS Pacific cod from Alaska is a "Best Choice" according to Seafood Watch, and those caught in the waters off British Columbia, Oregon, Washington and California are a "Good Alternative." Avoid most wild Atlantic cod (overfished) and Pacific cod from Russia and Japan (poor fishery-management practices). Farmed Atlantic cod is another "Best Choice" because it's raised in sustainable aquaculture systems.

IS IT FRESH? Ask to see and smell fish you want to buy—it should look firm and moist and smell like a perfect day at the beach. Point to the exact piece(s) you want, too (don't be shy). Almost all seafood is frozen at sea to preserve its freshness during transport. "Fresh" fish at your seafood counter has most likely been thawed ask so you know Cook previously frozen fish within 2 days and don't refreeze it or it will get mushy

FROZEN ASSETS You can often find frozen cod at the supermarket as either a whole fillet or in a bag of individually packaged 5-ounce portions. There's no difference in quality here, making frozen a good choice, particularly if you want to cook it later in the week. Thaw frozen fish in your refrigerator overnight or, if you're in a time crunch, submerge it in airtight packaging in cool water. *Carolyn Malcoun*

KARA CONRAD STYLING SUE JOSS MAYLOR MEDIA FOOD STYLING SUE JOSS MAYLOR PROPSTYLING PROPS

Parmesan-Crusted Cod with Tartar Sauce

ACTIVE: 20 MIN **TOTAL:** 30 MIN

Panko and Parmesan combined give our baked cod delectable crunch.

SERVE WITH *Roasted Rainbow Carrots (page 86) and steamed green beans.*

- ½ cup panko breadcrumbs
- ⅓ cup grated Parmesan cheese
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 large egg, lightly beaten
- 1¼ pounds cod, cut into 4 portions
- ½ teaspoon ground pepper, divided
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- Olive oil *or* avocado oil cooking spray *(see Tip, page 92)*
- ¼ cup nonfat plain Greek yogurt
- ¼ cup mayonnaise
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped cornichons *or* dill pickles
- 1 tablespoon minced shallot
- Lemon wedges for serving
- Chopped fresh parsley for garnish

1. Place a wire rack on a rimmed baking sheet in the oven; preheat to 450°F.
2. Combine panko and Parmesan in a shallow dish. Place flour and egg in 2 separate shallow dishes. Sprinkle cod with ¼ teaspoon each pepper and salt. Dredge the cod in flour, shaking off excess, then dip in egg, letting excess drip off, then coat with the panko mixture. Generously coat the top of each portion with cooking spray.
3. Remove the pan from the oven. Place the cod, sprayed-side down, on the rack. Coat the second side generously with cooking spray. Bake the fish until golden brown, 10 to 14 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, combine yogurt, mayonnaise, cornichons (or pickles), shallot and the remaining ¼ teaspoon pepper in a small bowl.
5. Serve the cod with the tartar sauce and lemon wedges, garnished with parsley, if desired.

SERVES 4: 4 OZ. FISH & 2 TBSP. SAUCE EACH

Calories 255, Fat 9g (sat 2g), Cholesterol 112mg, Carbs 16g, Total sugars 2g (added 1g), Protein 25g, Fiber 1g, Sodium 482mg, Potassium 351mg.

Manhattan Cod Chowder

ACTIVE: 20 MIN **TOTAL:** 40 MIN

This tomato-based chowder is a leaner alternative to creamy versions.

SERVE WITH *Oyster crackers and a baby kale Caesar salad*

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup chopped celery
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 1½ teaspoons dried thyme
- 3 cups seafood broth
- 1 cup water
- 1 14-ounce can no-salt-added diced tomatoes
- 3 cups diced potatoes
- 1¼ pounds cod, cut into bite-size chunks
- ½ teaspoon ground pepper
- ¼ teaspoon salt

Heat oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add onion, celery, garlic, tomato paste and thyme and cook, stirring, until the vegetables are just starting to brown, 3 to 5 minutes. Add broth, water, tomatoes (with juice) and potatoes; bring to a simmer over high heat. Reduce heat to maintain a simmer and cook until the potatoes are tender, 10 to 12 minutes. Add cod and cook, gently stirring occasionally, until just cooked through, 4 to 5 minutes more. Season with pepper and salt.

SERVES 5: ABOUT 2 CUPS EACH

Calories 226, Fat 6g (sat 1g), Cholesterol 45mg, Carbs 24g, Total sugars 6g (added 0g), Protein 19g, Fiber 4g, Sodium 555mg, Potassium 998mg.

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Seared Cod with Spinach-Lemon Sauce

ACTIVE: 25 MIN **TOTAL:** 25 MIN

A citrus-laced spinach sauce zests up delicate cod. Since this is the season for Meyer lemons, use their juice instead of the lemon and orange if you happen upon them at the supermarket. SERVE WITH *Roasted cherry tomatoes and zucchini with angel hair pasta.*

- 1 5-ounce package baby spinach
- 3 tablespoons water
- ½ cup lightly packed fresh parsley sprigs
- 4 teaspoons lemon juice
- 4 teaspoons orange juice
- 1 clove garlic, quartered
- ½ teaspoon salt, divided
- ½ teaspoon ground pepper, divided
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 1¼ pounds cod, cut into 4 portions
- 1 tablespoon grapeseed oil *or* canola oil
- ¼ cup sliced toasted almonds

1. Place spinach and water in a microwave-safe bowl. Cover with plastic wrap and poke a few holes in it. Microwave on High until wilted, about 2 minutes.

2. Puree the wilted spinach (and any remaining water), parsley, lemon juice, orange juice, garlic, ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper and crushed red pepper in a blender until smooth. Set aside.

3. Sprinkle cod with the remaining ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper

4. Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Cook the cod, turning once, until golden brown and just cooked through, 5 to 7 minutes total. Transfer to a plate; tent with foil to keep warm.

5. Pour the reserved sauce into the pan and cook, stirring occasionally, until slightly thickened, about 1 minute. Serve the fish on top of the sauce, sprinkled with almonds.

SERVES 4: 4 OZ. FISH & 2 TBSP. SAUCE EACH

Calories 163, Fat 7g (sat 1g), Cholesterol 56mg, Carbs 4g, Total sugars 1g (added 0g), Protein 21g, Fiber 2g, Sodium 393mg, Potassium 587mg

IN THE THICK OF IT

The thinner pieces of cod will cook more quickly than thicker ones, so be prepared to remove them from the pan sooner.

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Gochujang-Glazed Cod & Broccolini Packets

ACTIVE: 30 MIN **TOTAL:** 45 MIN

Cooking in packets yields moist results with less cleanup. If you don't already have leftover cooked rice, look for unseasoned cooked brown rice at the supermarket in shelf-stable packets near other grains or in the freezer section (defrost before using) **SERVE WITH** *Sliced cucumbers and carrots tossed with a splash of rice vinegar*

- **1 tablespoon peanut oil *or* canola oil**
- **4 scallions, sliced**
- **2 cloves garlic, minced**
- **1 tablespoon minced fresh ginger**
- **2 cups cooked brown rice**
- **1 bunch broccolini, stalks halved if large**
- **½ teaspoon salt, divided**
- **1¼ pounds cod, cut into 4 portions**
- **¼ teaspoon ground pepper**
- **2 tablespoons gochujang *(see Tip, above)***
- **2 tablespoons mayonnaise**

1. Preheat oven to 450°F. Cut 4 large sheets of parchment paper or foil, about 18 inches long (if using foil, coat with cooking spray).

2. Heat oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add scallions, garlic and ginger and cook until softened and just starting to brown, 30 seconds to 1 minute. Add rice and cook, stirring occasionally, until hot, about 1 minute.

3. To make packets, lay out all 4 sheets of parchment (or foil) on a work surface with the long sides closest to you. Fold each in half (bringing the short sides together), then open. Place ½ cup of the rice on one side of each piece, then place equal portions of broccolini on the rice. Sprinkle with ¼ teaspoon salt. Top with a piece of fish and season with the remaining ¼ teaspoon salt and pepper. Combine gochujang and mayonnaise in a small bowl; brush the fish with 1 tablespoon each. Close the packets and seal the edges with small, tight folds. Nestle the packets on a large baking sheet.

4. Bake until the fish is just cooked through, about 14 minutes. (Carefully open a packet to check for doneness—be cautious of the steam.) Set each packet on its own plate. Cut an X in the top with scissors and carefully fold open.

SERVES 4: 1 PACKET EACH

Calories 298, Fat 7g (sat 1g), Cholesterol 58mg, Carbs 33g, Total sugars 3g (added 0g), Protein 24g, Fiber 3g, Sodium 628mg, Potassium 572mg.

BONUS RECIPES
Get more dinner-in-a-packet ideas at eatingwell.com/webextra

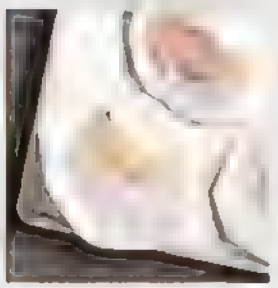
FIND OR SWAP
Can't find gochujang—Korean chile paste—at your supermarket? Look for it in an Asian market or make a substitute by combining 2 Tbsp. each white miso and sriracha with 2 tsp. molasses.

PACK IT UP

1. **LAYER** the rice, broccolini and fish on the parchment or foil and brush with sauce.

2. **SEAL** the packets closed with small, tight folds around the edges.

3. **NESTLE** the packets on a large baking sheet. It's OK if they touch.



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SEASON FOR THE HOLIDAYS

From kale and broccoli to heirloom turkey and ham, Thanksgiving at Front Porch Farm is a celebration of the bounty of their land

BY LIA HUBER

PHOTOGRAPHY BY ROSE HODGES

Snaking down a dusty road you catch glimpses of calendula and deep green tufts of lacinato kale, polka dots of olive trees and fields of heirloom wheat.

Nestled in this pocket valley in Healdsburg, California, Front Porch Farm is an oasis. And this Thanksgiving it's clear how much owners Mimi and Peter Buckley have to be thankful for. Each dish—creamy polenta served in a squash, sautéed kale and broccoli with a buttery sauce, a fresh ham culled from their Cinta Senese pigs and roasted with a sweet pepper glaze, among others—comes from what they grow on the farm.

The farm is a stunning vision, and a purposeful one too. From the beginning, the Buckleys knew they wanted to farm much like Joel Salatin of Polyface Farm in Virginia—whom Michael Pollan featured in his book *The Omnivore's Dilemma*. At its heart is the "closed system" farming practice, where all the inputs come from the farm itself: the bees that make the honey also pollinate the crops, and the goats that feast on weeds contribute fertilizer to the earth, and so on, in a continuous, closed loop.

The Buckleys have taken a circuitous route to full-time farming at Front Porch, but they've always had a passion for the land. The two met in Germany while working for Esprit. Peter was running several divisions of the clothing company and Mimi was visual director. When they returned to the States several years and two children later, they opened a private school with nature and gardening as focal points. "Food is a simple vehicle for getting kids—and people in general—to think systemically about the environment. It's the perfect entry point," says Peter, who went on to start the Center for Ecoliteracy, a nonprofit that promotes environmental education and distributes tools for

MENU

Burnt Orange & Escarole Salad

Beer-Braised Cipollini Onions

Glazed Roasted Delicata Squash

Sautéed Broccoli & Kale with Toasted Garlic Butter

Polenta-Stuffed Kabocha Squash

Herb-Roasted Turkey with Calvados Gravy

Fresh Ham with Red Pepper Glaze

Pumpkin Tart with Pecan Shortbread Crust

For a step-by-step Thanksgiving meal planner, go to eatingwell.com/webextra

Polenta-Stuffed Kabocha Squash

ACTIVE: [illegible] **TOTAL:** 1½ HRS

TO MAKE AHEAD: Prepare through Step 5; cover and refrigerate squash shell and polenta separately for up to 1 day; reheat polenta on the stovetop, thinning with a little broth, if necessary, before spooning into the squash and baking (Step 6).

The cheesy polenta filling makes these stuffed squash a great alternative to mashed potatoes as well as a hearty vegetarian entree.

- 2 2½- to 3-pound kabocha squash
- 4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 3 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 cups finely chopped onions
- ¼ cup fresh sage, minced, plus more for garnish
- 1 tablespoon minced fresh thyme
- ¾ teaspoon fine sea salt
- ¼ teaspoon ground pepper
- 1 cup fine- to medium-ground cornmeal
- 3 cups low-sodium vegetable broth or no-chicken broth
- 6 ounces Carmody or havarti cheese, cut into ½-inch cubes
- ½ cup grated Parmesan cheese

1. Preheat oven to 400°F.
2. Using a small sharp knife and working at a slight angle, cut a 3-inch circle off the top of each squash. Scoop out the seeds. Rub the flesh and skin of each squash with 1 tablespoon oil. Scatter garlic inside.
3. Roast the squash in a baking pan until the flesh is tender but the sides are not yet collapsing, 30 to 40 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, heat butter and the remaining 2 tablespoons oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat. Add onions, ¼ cup sage and thyme; cook, stirring often, until the onions are just starting to brown, 5 to 7 minutes. Season with salt and pepper. Add cornmeal, then whisk in broth. Bring to a gentle boil. Reduce heat, cover and simmer, whisking frequently, until the cornmeal is tender, 10 to 15 minutes.
5. When cool enough to handle, scrape about 1 cup of flesh out of each squash, leaving a layer in the shell so it retains its shape. Mash the flesh into a coarse puree and add to the polenta along with Carmody (or havarti) and Parmesan cheeses; stir well. Spoon into the squash shells.
6. Bake the stuffed squash until the cheese is melted and the polenta is steaming hot, about 20 minutes. Serve garnished with sage, if desired.

SERVES 12: ABOUT ½ CUP EACH

Calories 203, Fat 13g (sat 6g), Cholesterol 21mg, Carbs 16g, Total sugars 2g (added 0g), Protein 6g, Fiber 3g, Sodium 213mg, Potassium 135mg

CARMODY CHEESE *made by Bellwether Farms is a Sonoma County favorite. It's a mild, semi-firm, cheese made with milk from Jersey cows that brings an extra-buttery flavor to these polenta-stuffed squash.*

Herb-Roasted Turkey with Calvados Gravy

ACTIVE: 45 MIN **TOTAL:** 3¾ HRS (PLUS 12-24 HRS DRY-BRINING TIME)

A dry rub guarantees that this bird has lots of flavor. It's worth seeking out a heritage, organic or natural turkey, which won't contain the sodium solution that's pumped into most conventional turkeys. (Photo: page 55.)

DRY RUB & TURKEY
- 4 bay leaves
- 2 tablespoons kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon ground pepper, plus more to taste
- 1 12- to 14-pound turkey

FOR ROASTING & GRAVY
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
- ¼ cup minced fresh sage plus 2 tablespoons, divided
- 2 cups hot water
- 3-4 cups low-sodium chicken broth *or* homemade turkey stock, divided
- ⅓ cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup chopped shallots
- 1 cup apple brandy, such as Calvados

1. To dry-rub turkey: Grind bay leaves in a clean coffee grinder or mortar and pestle. Transfer to a small bowl and combine with salt and pepper. Remove any giblets from the turkey. Loosen the skin over the breast, legs and thighs and rub the meat with the salt mixture. Place the turkey in a roasting pan. Refrigerate, uncovered, for 12 to 24 hours.

2. To roast turkey: Position oven rack in lower third of oven; preheat to 475°F.

3. Remove the turkey from the refrigerator. Combine butter and ¼ cup sage in a small bowl. Rub the mixture under the skin over the breast, legs and thighs. Tuck the wing tips under the turkey and tie the legs together with kitchen string, if desired. Place the turkey on a roasting rack set in the roasting pan. Let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes.

4. Roast the turkey for 20 minutes.

5. Reduce oven temperature to 350°. Pour hot water into the pan. Continue roasting, tenting the breast or legs with foil if the skin is getting too dark, until a thermometer inserted horizontally into the deepest part of the thigh without touching bone registers 165°F, 1½ to 2 hours. (If your turkey is larger than 14 pounds, plan to add an extra 15 minutes of roasting time for each additional pound.)

6. Carefully transfer the turkey to a clean cutting board, loosely tent with foil and let rest for 20 to 30 minutes before carving.

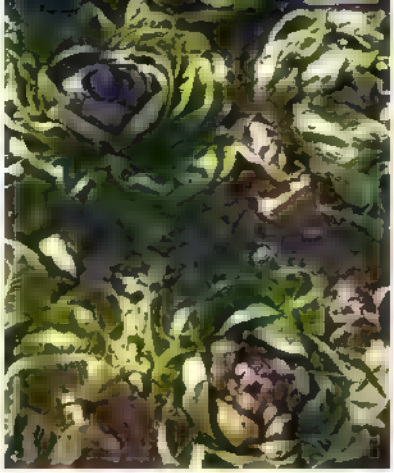
7. To prepare gravy: Pour pan juices from the roasting pan into a large glass measuring cup (leave any browned bits in the pan). Place the measuring cup in the freezer until the fat rises to the top, about 10 minutes. (Or pour into a fat separator and pour the defatted juices into a large measuring cup.)

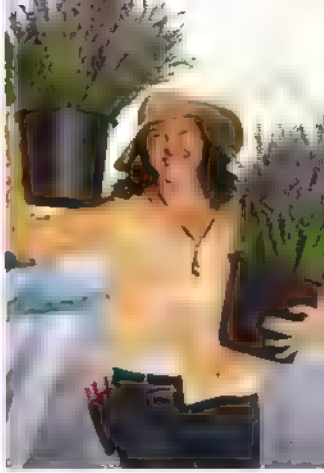
8. Transfer 3 tablespoons of fat from the separated pan juices back to the roasting pan (discard any remaining fat). Add enough broth (or stock) to the defatted juices to total 4 cups liquid. Whisk ½ cup broth (or stock) with flour in a separate small bowl until smooth.

9. Set the roasting pan over two burners on medium-high heat. Add shallots and the remaining 2 tablespoons sage; cook, whisking, until the shallots soften and the pan drippings are browning, about 2 minutes. Pour in brandy; cook, whisking to scrape up the browned bits, until almost evaporated, 1 to 3 minutes. Add the broth-juices mixture and bring to a boil; boil for 4 minutes. Whisk the flour mixture again and add to the pan. Cook, whisking constantly, until the gravy thickens, 1 to 3 minutes more. Carefully pour the gravy through a fine-mesh sieve into a large measuring cup. Taste and season with pepper. Transfer to a serving container. Serve the turkey with the gravy.

SERVES 12: 3 OZ. MEAT & ¼ CUP GRAVY EACH (PLUS LEFTOVERS)
Calories 213, Fat 7g (sat 3g), Cholesterol 95mg, Carbs 3g, Total sugars 1g (added 0g), Protein 26g, Fiber 0g, Sodium 436mg, Potassium 252mg.

STYLING BY NGUON FOOD. ROD PIPESHIND. PROPS





Front Porch Farm sells its produce, meats and fresh herbs at local farmers' markets and directly to area chefs by special order. The farm also has an open-air pavilion that's available for catering events, which can be adorned with blooms from its cut-flower business managed by Zoe Hitchner *(right)*, who was a guest at the Thanksgiving meal *(pictured on page 55)*.

helping students learn about food systems.

As passionate as the Buckleys were about their pursuits, by 2010 they were ready to try their hands at full-time farming. "All my jobs were very process-oriented, in meeting rooms," says Peter. "I was ready to put literal seeds in the ground and watch them grow."

Much to the Buckleys' delight, what started as an experiment in farming has grown into a successful, sustainable ecosystem. And the farm has spawned a community around it as well. There are local chefs who dream up creations centered around what Front Porch produces. Passionate millers and bakers work with the heirloom wheat they grow. Skilled artisans create melt-in-your-mouth salumi using the Cinta Senese pigs—famed for their exceptionally flavorful meat and only raised in the States by the Buckleys.

Many of those who share a passion for what Front Porch is doing gather around the Thanksgiving table with the Buckleys. "In all the work that we've done and are doing," says Peter, gesturing out over the rustic patchwork of crops, "it's about creating the conditions for life to flourish." The ripple effect is healthy soil, nourishing food, vibrant community... something to be thankful for indeed.

LIA HUBER *is the founder of the* NOURISH Evolution *and* Cook the Seasons. *She lives in Healdsburg, California.*

SONOMA PAIRINGS

Gloria Ferrer, Sonoma Brut, $22
Start the party with this delicious dry bubbly with pear and floral aromas.

Kyme Vermentino "Hers," Carneros-Sonoma County, $24
This crisp white smells of jasmine and pineapple but finishes with a slightly salty bite. A perfect foil for the sweet vinaigrette on the salad and honey glaze on the squash.

Lioco Chardonnay, Sonoma County, $22
With subtle richness, this stone-fruit-flavored white only has a touch of oak, making it a favorite among Chardonnay and non-Chardonnay lovers.

Banshee Sonoma County Pinot Noir, $25
Sonoma Pinot Noirs tend to be earthier than their Napa neighbors due to the vineyards' proximity to the ocean, making this dark-cherry-flavored red irresistible alongside turkey.

Benzinger Sonoma County Merlot, $19
Certified sustainable and Biodynamic, Benzinger's soft, velvety Merlot has heft for the Cabernet lovers but pairs better with the ham and turkey.

Fresh Ham with Red Pepper Glaze

ACTIVE: 45 MIN **TOTAL:** 5 HRS (PLUS 2-3 DAYS BRINING TIME)

A fresh ham is a pork hind leg roast that hasn't been cured or smoked. Many markets stock them, but you may need to special order one. Ask your butcher to remove the skin and leave a layer of fat to self baste the ham as it roasts.

BRINE & HAM

- 6 quarts water
- 2 cups light brown sugar
- 1 cup kosher salt
- 12 whole cloves
- 12 allspice berries
- 4 bay leaves
- 2 cups ice cubes
- 1 10- to 12-pound shank-end fresh ham

FOR ROASTING

- 5 cloves garlic, chopped
- 3 tablespoons minced fresh thyme
- 1 tablespoon kosher salt
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- ½ teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 6 medium leeks

RED PEPPER GLAZE

- ½ cup red pepper jelly
- ¼ cup honey
- 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger
- 1 tablespoon light brown sugar

1. To brine ham: Heat water, 2 cups brown sugar, 1 cup salt, cloves, all spice and bay leaves in a large pot over medium-low heat, stirring often, until the sugar and salt are dissolved. Add ice and stir to cool the liquid.
2. Score fat of ham into a 2-inch-wide crosshatch pattern without cutting into the meat. Submerge in the brine. Refrigerate for 2 to 3 days
3. To roast ham: Preheat oven to 450°F.
4. Pound garlic, thyme and salt to a paste in a mortar and pestle (or in a mini food processor). Transfer to a bowl and stir in oil and crushed red pepper. Remove the ham from the brine and thoroughly pat dry with paper towels. Rub the paste all over the ham and into the scored cuts.
5. Trim the root end and top inch of greens from leeks; cut in half lengthwise. Submerge them in a large bowl of water and gently separate the layers to remove any grit, while keeping each piece together. Drain well
6. Arrange a layer of leeks in a large roasting pan. Set the ham on top, with the fat cap facing up. Roast in the middle of the oven for 20 minutes.
7. To prepare glaze: Bring jelly, honey, ginger and brown sugar to a simmer in a small saucepan, stirring, to melt the sugar. Remove from heat.
8. After 20 minutes, brush the ham with ¼ cup of the glaze.
9. Reduce oven temperature to 300°. Roast, brushing with 1 tablespoon glaze every 30 minutes, until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part without touching bone registers 150°F, about 3 hours.
10. Transfer the ham to a clean cutting board, loosely tent with foil and let rest for 20 minutes before slicing. Serve with the leeks, if desired

SERVES 12: 3 OZ. HAM EACH (PLUS LEFTOVERS)
Calories 215, Fat 5g (sat 2g), Cholesterol 88mg, Carbs 9g, Total sugars 9g (added 8g), Protein 31g, Fiber 0g, Sodium 536mg, Potassium 521mg.

SOMA

Burnt Orange & Escarole Salad

ACTIVE: 25 MIN **TOTAL:** 45 MIN
TO MAKE AHEAD: Prepare through Step 3, refrigerate oranges and dressing separately for up to 1 day. Let stand at room temperature for 30 minutes before finishing the salad

The oranges in this seasonal salad are caramelized in honey and not actually "burnt." The result is a way more complex citrus flavor than just slicing the fruit onto your greens.

- 2 sprigs fresh rosemary
- ¼ cup honey
- ⅓ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 tablespoons cider vinegar
- 2 tablespoons fresh orange juice
- 2 tablespoons minced shallot
- ½ teaspoon fine sea salt
- 3 medium oranges, peeled and cut crosswise into 4 thick slices
- 16 cups torn escarole (about 2 heads)
- ⅓ cup slivered almonds, toasted

1. Coarsely crush or chop rosemary and place in a small saucepan. Add honey and bring to a boil over medium heat. Remove from heat and let steep for 30 minutes
2. Meanwhile, whisk oil, vinegar, orange juice, shallot and salt in a large bowl until combined.
3. Strain the rosemary from the honey and pour the honey into a large cast-iron or nonstick skillet. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Add orange slices and cook until they just start to brown, about 3 minutes. Carefully turn the slices over and cook for another 3 minutes. Remove the orange slices to a plate. Whisk the honey and juice from the pan into the dressing in the large bowl
4. Add escarole to the dressing and toss well to coat. Serve the salad topped with the oranges and sprinkled with almonds

SERVES 12: ABOUT 1 CUP EACH
Calories 121, Fat 8g (sat 1g), Cholesterol 0mg, Carbs 13g, Total sugars 9g (added 6g), Protein 2g, Fiber 3g, Sodium 112mg, Potassium 307mg

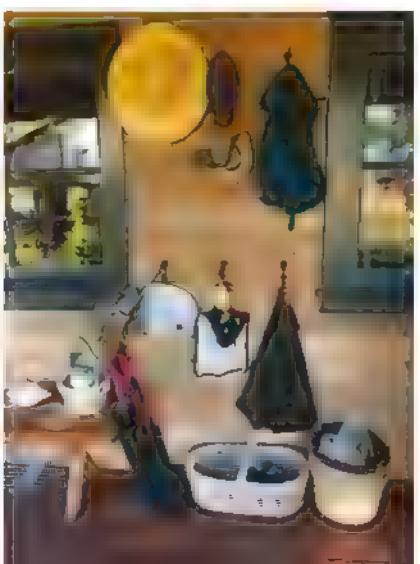
Beer-Braised Cipollini Onions

ACTIVE: 40 MIN **TOTAL:** 1 HR 20 MIN
TO MAKE AHEAD: Peel onions (Step 1), cover and refrigerate for up to 2 days and/or prepare through Step 3, cover and refrigerate for up to 2 days; reheat just before serving.
Creamed pearl onions have long been a Thanksgiving staple, but these sweet and savory cipollinis may send that recipe to the back of your file for good. For a fruity (and gluten-free) twist, use your favorite hard cider instead of beer.

- **2 pounds cipollini *or* pearl onions**
- **2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- **1 tablespoon butter**
- **½ teaspoon fine sea salt**
- **½ teaspoon ground pepper**
- **1 12-ounce bottle Belgian-style wheat ale, lager *or* hard cider**
- **2 tablespoons packed light brown sugar**
- **2 sprigs fresh thyme**

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add onions and cook for 1 minute. Drain. Peel and trim the root end, if necessary, but leave the onions whole.
2. Heat oil and butter in a large skillet over medium-high heat until the butter is melted. Add the onions and cook, stirring often, until browned in spots, 5 to 7 minutes. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Stir in beer (or hard cider), brown sugar and thyme; bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to maintain a simmer, cover and cook for 15 minutes.
3. Uncover and gently stir the onions. Increase the heat to medium-high and cook at a gentle boil, spooning the sauce over the onions frequently, until the sauce has thickened to a light syrup, 8 to 10 minutes. Remove thyme sprigs before serving.
SERVES 12: ABOUT ¼ CUP EACH
Calories 81, Fat 3g (sat 1g), Cholesterol 3mg, Carbs 10g, Total sugars 5g (added 2g), Protein 1g, Fiber 1g, Sodium 102mg, Potassium 123mg.

CIPOLLINI ONIONS
Once only found in restaurants and farmers' markets, these exceptionally sweet little onions are now showing up at well-stocked supermarkets.



Sautéed Broccoli & Kale with Toasted Garlic Butter

ACTIVE: 45 MIN. **TOTAL:** 45 MIN.

TO MAKE AHEAD: Prepare through Step 1, cover and refrigerate for up to 2 days. Finish with Steps 2-3 just before serving.

Sure, broccoli and kale are great with just about any meal, but what makes this dish holiday worthy is the special sauce. Gently heating the butter, garlic and crushed red pepper [illegible] the garlic and coaxes out a pleasa[illegible]ness.

- 2 bunches kale (abou[illegible] pounds), preferably lacinato
- [illegible] cup water, divided
- 2 large heads broccoli, trimmed and cut into florets (about 12 cups)
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 5 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- ¼ teaspoon crushed red pepper, plus more for garnish
- ¾ teaspoon fine sea salt
- Maldon sea salt (optional)

1. Remove tough stems and ribs from kale; coarsely chop the greens. Cook the kale in ½ cup water in a large skillet over medium-high heat, covered, until barely tender, 2 to 3 minutes. Transfer to a colander. Cook broccoli the same way with the remaining ½ cup water. Transfer the kale to a large bowl; drain the broccoli in the colander. Wipe the pan dry.

2. Heat 1 tablespoon oil in the pan over medium-high heat. Add the kale and cook, stirring often, until tender and browned in spots, 4 to 6 minutes. Transfer to the bowl. Heat the remaining 1 tablespoon oil in the pan. Add the broccoli and cook, stirring often, until tender and browned in spots, 4 to 6 minutes. Transfer to the bowl.

3. Heat butter, garlic and crushed red pepper in the pan over medium heat until the butter is melted. Cook, stirring constantly, until the garlic is light brown, 1 to 2 minutes. Drizzle the butter over the vegetables and sprinkle with ¾ teaspoon salt; gently toss to combine. Serve topped with a sprinkling of Maldon sea salt and crushed red pepper, if desired.

SERVES 12: ABOUT ¾ CUP EACH

Calories 105, Fat 7g (sat 3g), Cholesterol 10mg, Carbs 9g, Total sugars 0g (added 0g), Protein 5g, Fiber 3g, Sodium 187mg, Potassium 516mg.

From the kitchen window of their remodeled 1910 farmhouse *(middle left)*, Peter and Wendi Buckley *(left)* can look out over the fields of grains and vegetables at Front Porch Farm.

Glazed Roasted Delicata Squash

ACTIVE: 30 MIN. **TOTAL:** 1¼ HRS

TO MAKE AHEAD: Prepare through Step 3 and let stand at room temperature for up to 2 hours; just before serving, reheat, if desired, then finish with Step 4.

The sweet-and-tangy glaze brightens the earthy flavor of roasted winter squash. If you use delicata, the whole squash—including the gorgeous skin—is edible.

- **5 pounds delicata or acorn squash**
- **4 shallots, quartered lengthwise**
- **3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- **½ teaspoon fine sea salt plus a pinch, divided**
- **¼ teaspoon ground pepper**
- **½ cup honey**
- **½ cup cider vinegar**
- **½ cup pomegranate seeds**
- **¼ cup pine nuts, toasted**
- **¼ cup fresh mint, finely chopped**

1. Position racks in upper and lower thirds of oven; preheat to 400°F.

2. Halve squash lengthwise and scoop out the seeds. Cut crosswise into 1-inch-thick slices. Toss the squash slices and shallots with oil, ½ teaspoon salt and pepper in a large bowl. Divide between 2 large rimmed baking sheets.

3. Roast, turning each piece over and rotating the pans top to bottom halfway through, until the squash is tender and caramelized in spots, 30 to 40 minutes. Transfer the squash and shallots to a serving platter.

4. A few minutes before serving, combine honey, vinegar and a pinch of salt in a small saucepan; bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to a lively simmer and cook, watching closely toward the end, until reduced to about ½ cup, 5 to 8 minutes. Immediately drizzle the syrup over the squash. Serve topped with pomegranate seeds, pine nuts and mint.

SERVES 12: 3-5 SQUASH SLICES EACH

Calories 164, Fat 6g (sat 1g), Cholesterol 0mg, Carbs 30g, Total sugars 16g (added 12g), Protein 2g, Fiber 3g, Sodium 116mg, Potassium 578mg.

Pumpkin Tart with Pecan-Shortbread Crust

ACTIVE: 30 MIN. **TOTAL:** 4 HRS (INCLUDING 2 HRS [illegible] NG TIME)

TO MAKE AHEAD: [illegible]posely cover and refrigerate the tart for up to 1 day; make whipped cream just before serving.

A pleasant tang, courtesy of Greek yogurt in the filling, and a mascarpone cheese whipped cream topping make this tart [illegible] and beyond classic pumpkin pie.

CRUST
- [illegible] cup pecans
- [illegible] whole-wheat flour (see Tip, page 92)
- [illegible] tablespoons melted unsalted butter
- [illegible] tablespoons maple syrup
- [illegible] teaspoon fine sea salt

FILLING
- 1 cup packed light brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons pumpkin pie spice
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- ½ teaspoon fine sea salt
- ½ cup heavy cream
- ½ cup mascarpone cheese
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract

- [illegible] canned pumpkin puree
- 2 large eggs
- ½ cup low-fat plain Greek yogurt

1. [illegible] to 350°F. Coat a 10-inch [illegible] removable bottom with cooking spray.

2. Process pecans in a food processor until finely ground. Add oat flour, butter, maple syrup and salt; pulse until just combined. Transfer to the prepared pan and firmly press into the bottom and up the sides.

3. Bake the crust until set but not browned, 12 to 14 minutes. Let cool on a wire rack for 15 minutes.

4. To prepare filling: Blend pumpkin puree, eggs, yogurt, brown sugar, pumpkin pie spice, 1 teaspoon vanilla and salt in a food processor or blender. Place the crust on a baking sheet and spread the filling evenly to the edges.

5. Bake the tart until the filling is just set (the center may still appear soft, but will become more solid as it cools), about 35 minutes. Let cool on a wire rack to room temperature. Loosely cover and refrigerate until chilled, 2 to 3 hours.

6. To prepare topping: Whip cream, mascarpone, granulated sugar and vanilla in a medium bowl until soft peaks form.

7. Remove the pan sides before slicing the tart. Serve each slice topped with a dollop of the whipped cream.

SERVES 12: 1 SLICE TART + ABOUT 1 TBSP. TOPPING EACH
Calories 365, Fat 20g (sat 10g), Cholesterol 75mg, Carbs 30g, Total sugars 20g (added [illegible]g), Protein 6g, Fiber 3g, Sodium 230mg, Potassium 215mg.

AN UNEXPECTED CRUST

California pecans, rich in heart-healthy monounsaturated fats, make the base for this shortbread-like crust that's so scrumptious, you'll want to eat it on its own like a cookie.

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Rice in the Wild

For an authentic taste of North America we turn to wild rice, which has been revered by Minnesota's Ojibwe tribe for hundreds of years. Get a behind-the-scenes look at the harvest.

One of the only grains native to North America, wild rice grows in the lakes, rivers and streams that mottle the upper Midwest. It has sustained Native Americans in this area for generations. Here Bruce Auginaush (*seated*) and his nephew Russell, of the Ojibwe tribe, push their canoe through Lower Rice Lake knocking the rice off the stalk and collecting it in the canoe.

by CAROLYN MALCOUN

location photography by SARA RUBINSTEIN

food photography by ANDREW SCRIVANI

There's a buzz of anticipation before the start of the wild rice season on the Ojibwe's White Earth Reservation in northern Minnesota. Elders of the tribe determine when the harvest will begin and within a week teams take to the water. This community-wide event brings tribal members who have moved off the reservation home to help those who've remained. The harvest begins around September 1 and lasts for about 3 weeks. Some participate to earn money—one can make up to $600 a day—while others simply gather food for their families. The Ojibwe depend on wild rice as a staple ingredient and serve it at every ceremony and feast. According to legend, wild rice brought the Ojibwe to this part of the country—their creator said to settle where food grew on water. And when they came upon Minnesota's countless bodies of water, edged with waving stands of wild rice, they knew they had found their home.

RICE, RELEASED

1: Tribal members pole through the waters to harvest rice. They then take it for "finishing," the process of removing the hull to reveal the familiar shiny roasted grain.

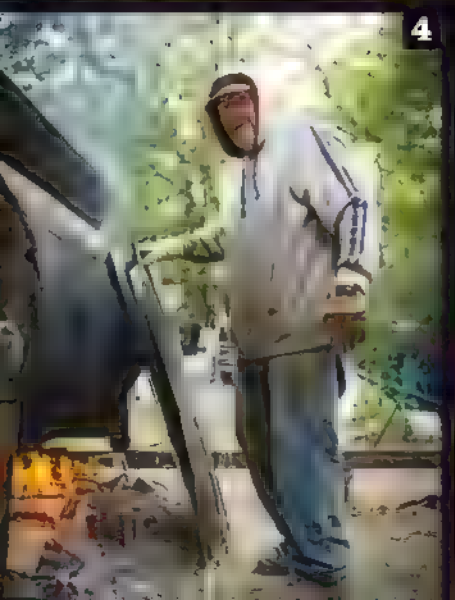
2: Though there are commercial processing facilities, many are homespun operations like this one owned by the Oppegard family.

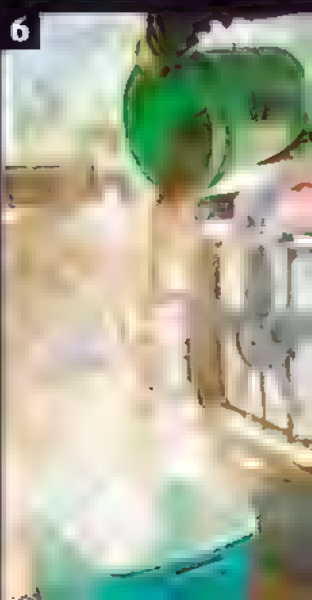
3: Each year the Oppegards average about 13,000 pounds of finished rice for the community.

4: Here the late Mike Oppegard tends to a rotating bin over a wood fire, which dries and tumbles the wild rice to remove it from its hull so it can be eaten.

5: When rice is finished in smaller batches at home, it is often toasted and stepped on in a pit to loosen the grain. Then it's tossed in a basket to separate the hulls.

6: Pouring the toasted grains in front of a fan to blow off the loosened hulls works too.





Fennel & Asiago Pie with a Wild Rice Crust (page 70)

WILD RICE
is considered a whole grain even though it's technically a grass. Choose it over white rice and you'll get more fiber and protein plus 30 times more antioxidants. Wild rice is also rich in plant sterols, which may help lower cholesterol.

Wild Rice & Mushroom Soup

ACTIVE: 1 HR **TOTAL:** 1 HR 50 MIN

Inspired by the creamy turkey and wild rice soup that is ubiquitous on Minnesota restaurant menus, this vegetarian version is a whole lot lighter and gets a rich flavor boost from caramelized leeks.

- 3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 6 cups sliced leeks (4-6 medium leeks)
- ½ cup dry sherry
- 1 pound cremini mushrooms, sliced
- 1½ cups sliced celery
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 6 cups mushroom broth
- 2 cups water
- 1 cup wild rice
- ¼ teaspoon ground pepper
- ⅛ teaspoon salt
- 6 tablespoons sour cream
- 6 tablespoons sliced almonds, toasted

1. Heat oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add leeks and cook, stirring occasionally, until starting to brown, 6 to 8 minutes. Reduce heat to medium and continue cooking, stirring often, until the leeks are golden brown and very tender, 5 to 10 minutes more.

2. Add sherry and cook, stirring often, for 1 minute. Stir in mushrooms and celery and cook, stirring often, until the mushroom liquid evaporates, 6 to 8 minutes. Add garlic and cook, stirring, for 30 seconds. Add broth, water and rice; cover and bring to a simmer.

3. Reduce heat to maintain a gentle simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, until the rice is tender, 50 minutes to 1 hour. Season with pepper and salt. Serve each portion topped with 1 tablespoon each sour cream and almonds.

SERVES 6: ABOUT 1⅓ CUPS EACH

Calories 309, Fat 13g (sat 3g), Cholesterol 6mg, Carbs 39g, Total sugars 6g (added 0g), Protein 9g, Fiber 5g, Sodium 566mg, Potassium 749mg.

Fennel & Asiago Pie with a Wild Rice Crust

ACTIVE: 1 HR **TOTAL:** 1¾ HRS

TO MAKE AHEAD: Prepare through Step 4, cover and refrigerate rice, garlic and fennel separately for up to 2 days; bring to room temperature before finishing the pie.

EQUIPMENT: 9-inch deep-dish pie pan

Wild rice bound with egg and cheese makes a lovely (and gluten-free) crust for this roasted garlic-and-fennel-studded pie. Try it for brunch or as a vegetarian entree anytime. (Photo: page 69)

- 1 cup wild rice
- 1 head garlic
- 1 teaspoon extra-virgin olive oil plus 2 tablespoons, divided
- 2 small-to-medium bulbs fennel
- 1½ tablespoons chopped fresh marjoram *or* 1½ teaspoons dried
- ¾ teaspoon ground pepper, divided
- ½ teaspoon salt, divided
- 6 large eggs, divided
- ¾ cup finely shredded Asiago cheese, divided
- 1 cup reduced-fat milk

1. Cook rice in a large saucepan of boiling water until just tender, 45 to 55 minutes. Drain; let cool for about 10 minutes.

2. Meanwhile, position racks in upper and lower thirds of oven; preheat to 450°F.

3. Rub off excess papery skin from garlic head without separating the cloves. Slice the tip off, exposing the cloves. Place the head on a piece of foil, drizzle with 1 teaspoon oil and wrap into a package. Roast on the top rack until the garlic is soft, 30 to 40 minutes, depending on size. Let stand until cool enough to handle, then gently squeeze the cloves out of the skin.

4. Meanwhile, remove fronds and/or stalks from the fennel and trim the bottoms. Keeping the cores intact, cut each bulb lengthwise into ½-inch-thick wedges. Toss the fennel in a bowl with marjoram, ¼ teaspoon pepper, ⅛ teaspoon salt and the remaining 2 tablespoons oil; spread evenly on a rimmed baking sheet. Roast on the bottom rack until golden brown on the bottom, 15 to 20 minutes. Turn the fennel over and continue roasting until golden brown on the other side, 5 to 10 minutes more.

5. Coat a 9-inch deep-dish pie pan with cooking spray. Combine the cooled rice, 1 egg, ¼ cup cheese, ¼ teaspoon pepper and ⅛ teaspoon salt in a medium bowl. Press evenly into the prepared pie pan. Bake the rice crust on the top rack until firm, 10 to 12 minutes. Let cool to room temperature.

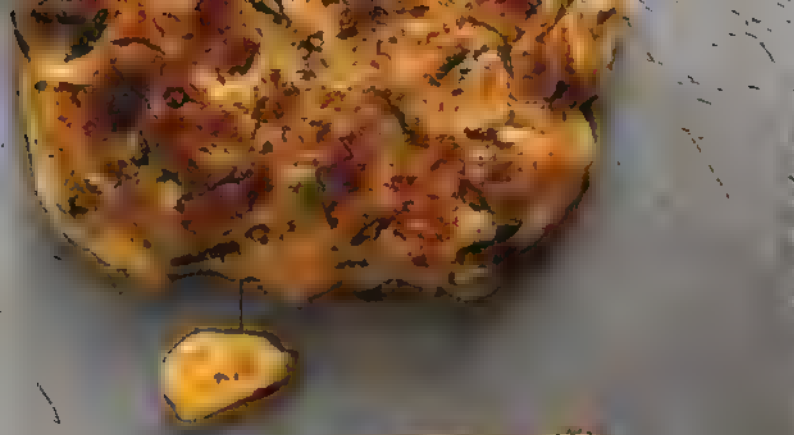
6. When the garlic, fennel and crust are done, reduce oven temperature to 375°.

7. Whisk milk with the remaining 5 eggs and ¼ teaspoon each salt and pepper. Pour into the cooled crust. Sprinkle with ¼ cup cheese. Arrange the fennel and garlic in the egg mixture, then sprinkle with the remaining ¼ cup cheese.

8. Bake the pie until puffed and golden, 30 to 40 minutes. Let cool 10 minutes before cutting into 6 wedges.

SERVES 6: 1 SLICE EACH

Calories 324, Fat 16g (sat 5g), Cholesterol 202mg, Carbs 30g, Total sugars 3g (added 0g), Protein 16g, Fiber 5g, Sodium 462mg, Potassium 588mg.



Wild Rice & Baby Kale Salad with Persimmons

ACTIVE: 20 MIN **TOTAL:** 1 HR

TO MAKE AHEAD: Prepare rice (Step 1) and refrigerate for up to 3 days.

Bring this colorful salad along to a holiday party this year and everyone will ooh and aah over how pretty it looks. Persimmons are commonly grown in California and ripen just in time to grace holiday tables in both sweet and savory preparations. If you can't find persimmons, diced apples are a good alternative in this dish.

- 1 cup wild rice
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 tablespoons champagne vinegar or white wine vinegar
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground pepper
- 6 cups packed baby kale (about 4 ounces)
- 3 ripe Fuyu persimmons (see Tip, page 92), diced, or 3 cups diced apples
- ½ cup dried cranberries
- ½ cup chopped flat-leaf parsley

1. Cook rice in a large saucepan of boiling water until just tender, about 45 minutes. Drain and rinse with cold water to cool; drain well.
2. Meanwhile, whisk oil, vinegar, salt and pepper in a large bowl. Add the rice and kale; marinate at room temperature, stirring occasionally, for 15 minutes. Stir in persimmons (or apples), cranberries and parsley.

SERVES 6: ABOUT 1½ CUPS EACH

Calories 248, Fat 10g (sat 1g), Cholesterol 0mg, Carbs 39g, Total sugars 15g (added 6g), Protein 5g, Fiber 4g, Sodium 307mg, Potassium 301mg

GET WILD

Most wild rice you'll find in the supermarket is cultivated rice (labeled "cultivated" or "paddy-grown") from California or Minnesota. For hand-harvested wild rice, look in specialty markets or order it from **realwildrice.com, nativeharvest.com** or **nettlakewildrice.com.** Bonus: it can cook in half the time.

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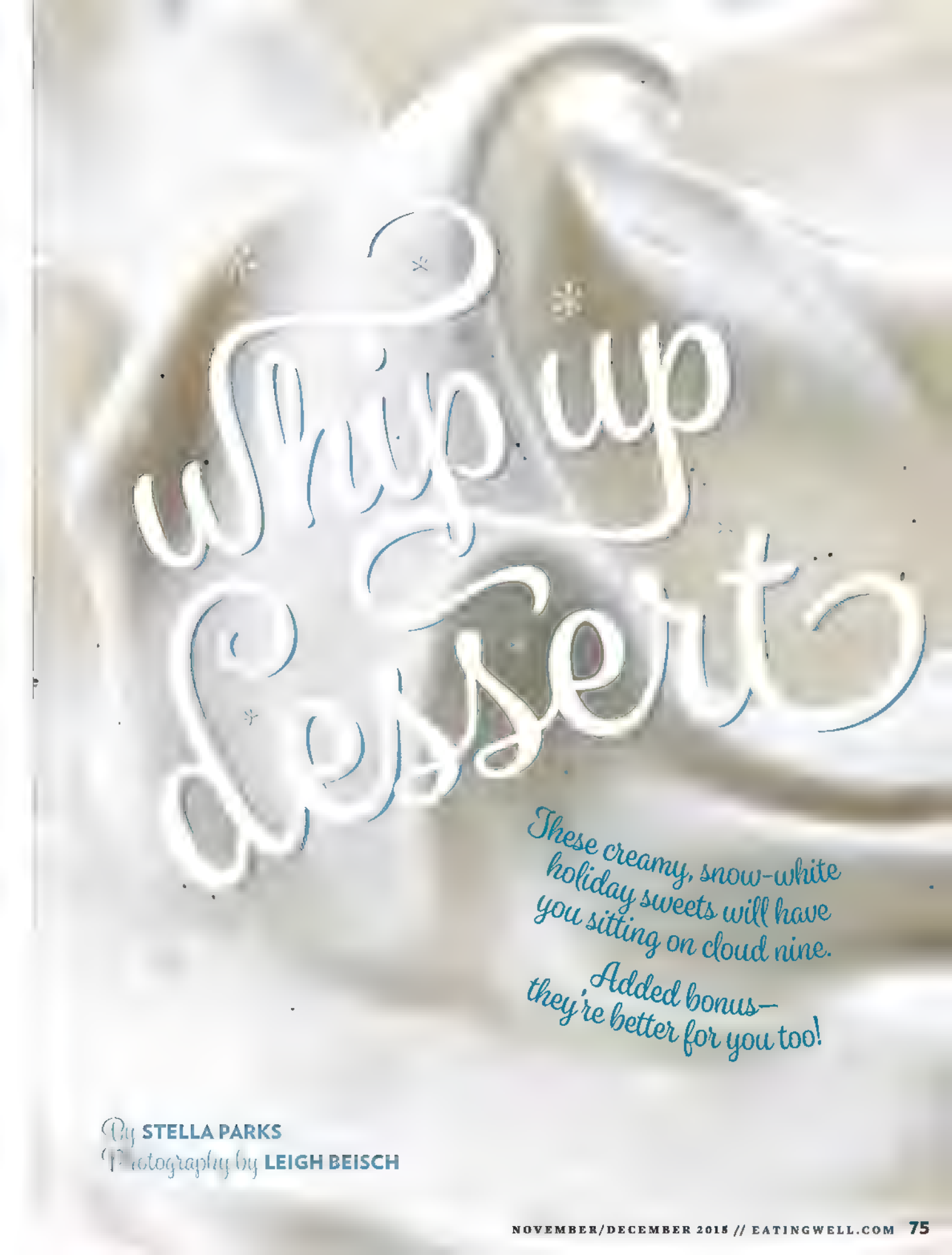

Whip up a dessert

These creamy, snow-white holiday sweets will have you sitting on cloud nine. Added bonus—they're better for you too!

By **STELLA PARKS**
Photography by **LEIGH BEISCH**

Whip It Good

You need to really *whip* the Greek yogurt and cream until super stiff—droopy peaks lack the structure needed to support a pie filling.

Eggnog Pie with Cranberry Sauce, p. 80

STYLING: DAWN REAKER/FOOD: GLENN JENKINS/PROPS:

Clementine & Cocoa Nib Meringues

ACTIVE: 30 MIN **TOTAL:** 3½ HRS

TO MAKE AHEAD: Store airtight for up to 2 weeks. **EQUIPMENT:** Pastry bag with ¾ inch star tip

These crunchy meringues taste like those break-apart chocolate oranges that sneak their way into some Christmas stockings. If you don't have a star-tip and pastry bag, improvise with a gallon-size plastic bag (snip ½ inch off one corner). Look for orange flower water and cocoa nibs in the baking section of natural food markets and well stocked supermarkets.

- 4 large egg whites
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1½ teaspoons clementine zest
- 1 tablespoon clementine juice
- ½ teaspoon orange flower water (optional)
- ⅛ teaspoon kosher salt
- ¼ cup confectioners' sugar
- 3 tablespoons raw cocoa nibs, plus more for garnish

1. Position racks in upper and lower thirds of oven; preheat to 200°F. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper.

2. Fit a large piping bag with a ¾ inch star tip. Hold the tip steady, give the bag a twist near the tip and tuck the twisted portion into the tip. This forms a stopper to prevent the meringue from flowing out until you're ready. For hands-free filling, set the piping bag tip-end down in a tall, wide glass and fold the top few inches of the bag over the glass to hold it open

3. Combine egg whites, granulated sugar, clementine juice, orange flower water (if using) and salt in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment. Whip on medium speed until opaque and white, but not yet fluffy, 3 to 5 minutes. Increase to medium-high and continue whipping until the meringue is very shiny, as thick as shaving cream and holds stiff peaks when the beater is lifted, 5 to 10 minutes more (this timing will vary considerably depending on the power of your mixer)

4. Meanwhile, pulse confectioners' sugar and cocoa nibs in a food processor until finely ground, about 90 seconds.

5. Sprinkle clementine zest and the cocoa-sugar over the meringue and gently fold in until just combined. Transfer to the piping bag. Fold or twist the top of the bag down to close.

6. Pull the piping tip to dislodge the "stopper," then squeeze gently until the meringue begins to flow. Pipe 6 rows of four 1½-inch "kisses" per baking sheet, about 1 inch apart. Sprinkle with additional chopped cocoa nibs, if desired.

7. Bake the meringues until firm and completely dry to the touch, about 1½ hours. Turn off the oven and leave the meringues in, with the door closed, for 1 hour more. Remove and let cool to room temperature

MAKES: 4 DOZEN 1½-INCH MERINGUES (1 MERINGUE EACH)

Calories 25, Fat 0g (sat 0g), Cholesterol 0mg, Carbs 5g, Total sugars 5g (added 5g), Protein 0g, Fiber 0g, Sodium 8mg, Potassium 10mg.

Essential Zest

Clementine zest is rich in essential oils, which can prevent egg whites from whipping, so it must be folded into the meringue at the last minute.

Vanilla Marshmallows

ACTIVE: 45 MIN **TOTAL:** 1¾ HRS

TO MAKE AHEAD: Prepare through Step 5 up to 3 days ahead. Store finished marshmallows airtight at room temperature, with wax paper between layers, for up to 2 weeks. **EQUIPMENT:** Candy thermometer

You won't believe how much better homemade marshmallows are than traditional store-bought ones until you taste one. Box up a few of each flavor (see "Flavorful Fluff," below) to give as gifts. You'll want to rely on the horsepower of a stand mixer to make these - hand mixers aren't typically powerful enough to get the job done.

- **3 envelopes unflavored gelatin (6¾ teaspoons)**
- **1 cup cool water, divided**
- **1½ teaspoons vanilla extract *or* seeds from 1 vanilla bean**
- **1¾ cups granulated sugar**
- **⅓ cup plus 2 tablespoons light corn syrup**
- **¼ teaspoon kosher salt**
- **⅓ cup packed confectioners' sugar for dusting**

1. Mix gelatin with ½ cup cool water in a small bowl, then stir in vanilla extract or seeds (no need to fully incorporate the vanilla seeds, if using; they will disperse later on). Set aside.

2. Combine the remaining ½ cup water, granulated sugar, corn syrup and salt in a medium saucepan. Cook over medium heat, stirring with a fork, until the syrup begins to simmer around the edges, 5 to 8 minutes. Clip a candy thermometer or other heatproof digital thermometer to the pot, making sure it's submerged in the liquid but not touching the bottom of the pot. Increase heat to medium-high and simmer without stirring until the syrup registers 250°F, 5 to 10 minutes more.

3. Remove from heat and transfer the thermometer to the bowl of a stand mixer. Scrape the hot syrup into the bowl with a heatproof spatula and let cool to 212°, 8 to 10 minutes.

4. Add the gelatin mixture to the syrup and mix on low speed with the whisk attachment for 1 minute. Increase to medium-high and whip until the fluff is roughly tripled in volume and balled up around the whisk, 8 to 10 minutes.

5. Lightly coat an 8-inch square baking pan with cooking spray. Scrape and smooth the fluff into the prepared pan. (If the mixture seems sticky, lightly oil or spray a spatula to help you smooth it into the pan.) Refrigerate until firm, about 1 hour. Or cover with foil and refrigerate for up to 3 days.

6. To cut marshmallows: Sift a bit of confectioners' sugar over the marshmallow, then invert the panful onto a cutting board. Sift more confectioners' sugar over the exposed surface and rub until no longer sticky to the touch. Cut into 36 marshmallows with a chef's knife, wiping the blade clean as needed. Put the remaining confectioners' sugar in a sealable bag and shake a few marshmallows at a time in it until the cut sides are no longer sticky.

MAKES: 3 DOZEN 1½-INCH MARSHMALLOWS (1 MARSHMALLOW EACH)

Calories 57, Fat 0g (sat 0g), Cholesterol 0mg, Carbs 14g, Total sugars 14g (added 14g), Protein 1g, Fiber 0g, Sodium 12mg, Potassium 1mg

The Right Temp

For perfect marshmallows, pay close attention to the temperature of the syrup as it cools—you'll whip up the fluffiest marshmallows when you add the gelatin to the syrup when it's 212°F.

Flavorful Fluff

Gingerbread

In Step 2, reduce corn syrup to ⅓ cup and add 3 Tbsp. molasses. In Step 4, after whipping the marshmallow fluff, reduce speed to low and incorporate 1 Tbsp. ground cinnamon, 1½ tsp. ground ginger and ¼ tsp. each ground nutmeg and cloves.

Cherry

In Step 1, mix gelatin in ½ cup 100% pure tart cherry juice instead of water. In Step 2, use 1 cup 100% pure tart cherry juice in place of the ½ cup water. It will take few extra minutes to reach 250°F, concentrating both the cherry flavor and color.

Looking for the best marshmallow to top this year's sweet potato casserole? Come to **eatingwell.com/webextra** *for a recipe for Sage Marshmallows.*

A Light Touch

Folding the pudding and whipped cream together requires a light touch to keep it creamy, so use a flexible spatula rather than a stiff one.

Banana Cream Pudding Parfait, p. 80

whip up dessert

Banana Cream Pudding Parfait

ACTIVE: 40 MIN **TOTAL:** 4 HRS 40 MIN (INCLUDING 3 HRS CHILLING TIME)

TO MAKE AHEAD: Prepare through Step 5 up to 5 days ahead. Finish Step 6 and refrigerate the assembled parfaits for up to 4 hours.

Banana-infused milk is the base of this intensely-flavored pudding. Folding it with whipped Greek yogurt gives it a mousse-like texture. Layers of toasted hazelnuts add a bit of crunch. Top with slices of banana brûlée for an easy-but-optional finishing touch. (Photo: page 79.)

BANANA PUDDING

- 1½ cups reduced-fat milk plus 2 tablespoons, divided
- 2 large or 3 small very ripe bananas, sliced
- 1 envelope unflavored gelatin (2¼ teaspoons)
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ cup nonfat dry milk
- ⅛ teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ cup heavy cream
- ½ cup reduced-fat plain Greek yogurt
- 1½ teaspoons vanilla extract

LAYERS & TOPPING

- 3 medium firm ripe bananas, sliced
- ¾ cup coarsely chopped toasted hazelnuts

1. To prepare pudding: Bring 1½ cups milk and banana slices to a simmer in a small nonreactive saucepan (*see Tip, page 92*), then remove from heat. Cover and let stand for 1 hour. Or cool to room temperature, cover and refrigerate for up to 1 day.

2. Mix gelatin with the remaining 2 tablespoons milk in a medium bowl, stirring to break up any lumps. Set a fine-mesh sieve over the bowl.

3. Add sugar, dry milk and salt to the banana-milk mixture; cook, stirring, until the dry ingredients have dissolved and the milk is steaming hot (do not let it boil), about 5 minutes.

4. Pour the milk mixture through the sieve into the gelatin, pressing on the bananas to extract as much milk as possible without actually mashing the pulp through the sieve. (Use the leftover pulp in a smoothie or muffin batter, or discard.) Whisk until the gelatin is dissolved. Cover and refrigerate until firm and cold, at least 3 hours and up to 5 days.

5. Scrape the chilled pudding into the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a whisk attachment and whip on medium-high. At first it will look something like cottage cheese, but continue beating until smooth, about 1 minute. Return the pudding to its original container. Combine cream, yogurt and vanilla in the bowl and beat on medium-high for 5 full minutes. Fold into the pudding.

6. To assemble parfaits: Spoon ¼ cup pudding into each of 6 parfait glasses. Top with 3 or 4 banana slices and 1½ tablespoons hazelnuts, then another layer of banana slices. Spoon on another ¼ cup pudding and top with the remaining banana slices and hazelnuts. (*To learn how to "brûlée" the banana slices for the topping, see page 92.*)

SERVES 6: ABOUT ½ CUP PUDDING & 2 TBSP NUTS EACH

Calories 348, Fat 18g (sat 6g), Cholesterol 35mg, Carbs 41g, Total sugars 32g (added 17g), Protein 10g, Fiber 3g, Sodium 100mg, Potassium 517mg.

STELLA PARKS *is a pastry chef and food writer living in Lexington, Kentucky. Find her on Twitter: @thebravetart*

Eggnog Pie with Cranberry Sauce

ACTIVE: 1 HR 20 MIN **TOTAL:** 10 HRS 20 MIN (INCLUDING 9 HRS CHILLING TIME)

TO MAKE AHEAD: Cover and refrigerate sauce, filling and crust separately for up to 5 days; refrigerate the assembled pie for up to 1 day. **EQUIPMENT:** 9-inch glass or ceramic pie pan (not deep-dish)

This festive pie combines the flavors of gingerbread and eggnog. An easy cranberry sauce balances the sweetness with a touch of tart. To lighten the load of holiday baking, each element can be prepared up to 5 days ahead. (Photo: page 76.)

CRANBERRY SAUCE

- 1¼ cups cranberries, fresh or frozen, thawed
- ½ cup unsweetened cranberry juice
- ½ cup sugar

GINGERSNAP CRUST

- 8 ounces gingersnaps or crisp ginger cookies
- 4 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt

FILLING

- 1¼ cups reduced-fat milk
- ¾ cup sugar
- ¼ cup cornstarch
- ½ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- ⅛ teaspoon ground ginger
- 4 large egg yolks
- ¼ cup bourbon or brandy
- ½ cup heavy cream
- ¼ cup reduced-fat plain Greek yogurt
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

1. Preheat oven to 350°F.

2. To prepare sauce: Bring cranberries, cranberry juice and ½ cup sugar to a boil in a small nonreactive saucepan (*see Tip, page 92*) over high heat. When the first cranberry pops, reduce heat to maintain a simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, until most of the cranberries have popped, 10 to 12 minutes more. Remove from heat, transfer to a nonreactive container and let cool to room temperature, then refrigerate until ready to serve.

3. Meanwhile, pulse cookies in a food processor until powdery; add butter and salt and pulse until moistened. Transfer to a 9-inch glass or ceramic pie pan (not deep-dish) and press into the bottom and up the sides.

4. Bake the crust on a sheet pan until firm, 18 to 20 minutes. Let cool on a wire rack.

5. To prepare filling: Bring milk to a simmer over medium heat in a medium saucepan. Meanwhile, whisk sugar, cornstarch, nutmeg, cinnamon, salt and ginger in a medium bowl, followed by egg yolks and bourbon (or brandy). Whisk in ½ cup of the hot milk, then whisk in the remaining milk in two more additions. Pour the mixture into the saucepan. Cook over medium-low heat, whisking slowly but constantly, until the custard is actively steaming and starts to thicken, about 6 minutes. As soon as it starts to bubble, set a timer and continue whisking vigorously for 2 full minutes. Transfer to a large bowl. Press plastic wrap directly on the surface and refrigerate until cool, at least 1 hour and up to 5 days.

6. To assemble pie: Combine cream, yogurt and vanilla in the bowl of a stand mixer. Beat on medium-high with the whisk attachment for 5 full minutes.

7. Stir the custard until creamy. Fold in about ¼ cup of the whipped cream mixture with a spatula, then gently fold in the rest.

8. Transfer the filling to the prepared crust, smoothing into shape with the back of a spoon. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate for at least 8 hours or up to 1 day before slicing. Serve topped with the cranberry sauce.

SERVES 10: 1 SLICE PIE & 1½ TBSP SAUCE EACH

Calories 355, Fat 14g (sat 7g), Cholesterol 105mg, Carbs 51g, Total sugars 34g (added 30g), Protein 4g, Fiber 1g, Sodium 195mg, Potassium 162mg.

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Green Beans & Pancetta with Whole Grain Mustard Dressing

30-MINUTE STAND-

By Hilary Meyer

Photography by Laurie Proffitt

Rutabaga Puree with Goat Cheese & Rosemary

Roasted Rainbow Carrots with Sage Brown Butter

This is the year to make *easy* the new holiday tradition. These sophisticated takes on everything from green beans to cranberry sauce keep time on your side.

—OUT SIDES

Frisée & Fingerling Potato Salad

NO LAST-MINUTE PANIC.
These sides are quick enough to make once your turkey's out of the oven.

Garlic-Parmesan Roasted Brussels Sprouts

ACTIVE: 10 MIN **TOTAL:** 30 MIN

We roast these lemon-thyme-infused Brussels sprouts on two large baking sheets instead of just one to help them cook quickly and get nice and browned.

- **2 pounds Brussels sprouts, trimmed and halved (or quartered if large)**
- **1 small lemon, sliced**
- **4 cloves garlic, sliced**
- **¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil**
- **1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme *or* 1 teaspoon dried**
- **½ teaspoon salt**
- **¼ teaspoon ground pepper**
- **⅓ cup finely shredded Parmesan cheese**
- **¼ cup toasted pine nuts**

1. Position racks in upper and lower third of oven; preheat to 425°F.

2. Toss Brussels sprouts, lemon, garlic, oil, thyme, salt and pepper in a large bowl. Divide between 2 large rimmed baking sheets and spread in an even layer.

3. Roast without stirring for 10 minutes. Switch the pans top to bottom and continue roasting, without stirring, until lightly browned and tender, 8 to 10 minutes more. Transfer to a serving dish and sprinkle with Parmesan and pine nuts.

SERVES 6: 1 CUP EACH

Calories 204, Fat 15g (sat 3g), Cholesterol 3mg, Carbs 14g, Total sugars 3g (added 0g), Protein 7g, Fiber 5g, Sodium 304mg, Potassium 577mg.

Jalapeño-Cranberry Relish

ACTIVE: 10 MIN **TOTAL:** 20 MIN

TO MAKE AHEAD: Cover and refrigerate for up to 2 days.

Add some zing to your holidays with this jalapeño-and-lime-infused cranberry relish. And don't forget the leftovers! It pairs beautifully with turkey, but also works just as well as a spread for sandwiches or even as a taco topping.

- **1 12-ounce bag cranberries, fresh *or* frozen (thawed)**
- **1 teaspoon lime zest**
- **2 teaspoons lime juice**
- **1-2 fresh jalapeños, seeded and coarsely chopped**
- **2 tablespoons minced red onion**
- **⅓ cup sugar**
- **2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil**
- **Pinch of salt**

Combine cranberries, lime zest, lime juice, jalapeño to taste, onion, sugar, oil and salt in a food processor. Pulse until coarsely chopped. Let stand until the sugar has dissolved, about 10 minutes. Transfer to a serving dish. Serve at room temperature or cover and refrigerate until cold.

MAKES: ABOUT 2 CUPS (¼-CUP SERVING)

Calories 85, Fat 4g (sat 1g), Cholesterol 0mg, Carbs 14g, Total sugars 10g (added 8g), Protein 0g, Fiber 2g, Sodium 19mg, Potassium 45mg.

Jalapeño-Cranberry Relish

Garlic-Parmesan Roasted Brussels Sprouts

STYLING: VANESSA DURFEE/FOOD STYLING BY KARIN JOHNSON; PROPS

BONUS RECIPES
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THESE EASY SIDES ARE BOUND TO BECOME NEW FAVORITES.

And having your friends and family look forward to the vegetables as much as they do the pie is something to be thankful for.

Green Beans & Pancetta with Whole-Grain Mustard Dressing

ACTIVE: 20 MIN **TOTAL:** 30 MIN

No holiday table is complete without green beans. Here we toss them with crispy bits of pancetta, shallot and whole-grain mustard after cooking. The result is big flavor in a flash. (Photo: page 82.)

- ½ cup chopped pancetta (about 2 ounces)
- 2 tablespoons chopped shallot
- 1½ pounds green beans, trimmed
- ½ cup water
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 tablespoons whole-grain mustard
- ¼ teaspoon ground pepper

1. Heat a large skillet over medium heat. Add pancetta and cook, stirring often, until crispy, about 5 minutes. Transfer with a slotted spoon to a paper-towel-lined plate.

2. Add shallot and green beans to the pan. Cook, stirring, until fragrant, 1 to 2 minutes. Add water and salt. Cover and cook until the beans are tender and the water has evaporated, about 8 minutes. Remove from heat and toss with mustard, pepper and the reserved pancetta. Transfer to a serving dish.

SERVES 6: ABOUT ¾ CUP EACH

Calories 81, Fat 4g (sat 1g), Cholesterol 7mg, Carbs 9g, Total sugars 4g (added 0g), Protein 4g, Fiber 3g, Sodium 358mg, Potassium 252mg.

Roasted Rainbow Carrots with Sage Brown Butter

ACTIVE: 15 MIN **TOTAL:** 30 MIN

Wow your guests with multicolored carrots dressed in a brown butter and sage sauce. They only take 15 minutes to roast, so pop them in the oven while you carve the turkey and they'll be ready in time to eat. (Photo: page 83.)

- 2 pounds small carrots, preferably multicolored
- 2 teaspoons extra-virgin olive oil
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh sage *or* 2 teaspoons dried, plus more for garnish

1. Position racks in upper and lower third of oven; preheat to 450°F.

2. Trim carrots and cut in half lengthwise. Toss with oil and salt in a large bowl. Divide between 2 large rimmed baking sheets and spread in an even layer.

3. Roast the carrots, stirring once and switching the pans top to bottom halfway through, until tender, about 15 minutes.

4. Meanwhile, melt butter in a small skillet over medium-high heat. Cook until just starting to brown, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat. When the butter stops bubbling, stir in sage. Transfer the carrots to a serving dish and drizzle the sage brown butter over them. Garnish with fresh sage, if desired.

SERVES 6: 1 CUP EACH

Calories 121, Fat 8g (sat 4g), Cholesterol 15mg, Carbs 13g, Total sugars 6g (added 0g), Protein 1g, Fiber 4g, Sodium 384mg, Potassium 435mg.

Frisée & Fingerling Potato Salad

ACTIVE: 30 MIN **TOTAL:** 30 MIN

TO MAKE AHEAD: Cover and refrigerate the dressing (Step 3) for up to 2 days.

This olive-and-caper-dressed salad is an easy way to jazz up roasted potatoes. We love how frisée holds up under the warm potatoes, but any sturdy green, such as curly endive or escarole, works too. (Photo: page 83.)

- 1½ pounds fingerling potatoes *or* baby yellow potatoes, halved lengthwise
- 4 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- ½ teaspoon salt, divided
- 2 tablespoons red-wine vinegar
- 1 tablespoon chopped shallot
- 1 tablespoon capers, rinsed and coarsely chopped
- ¼ teaspoon ground pepper
- 8 cups torn frisée (1 to 2 heads)
- ¾ cup fresh parsley leaves, coarsely chopped
- ¼ cup pitted green olives, quartered

The new Pewter Stoneware collection from Juliska looks gorgeous. Plus it's microwave-, oven-, dishwasher- and freezer-safe. —Breana Lai, Associate Food Editor

1. Preheat oven to 450°F.

2. Toss potatoes with 1 tablespoon oil and ¼ teaspoon salt in a large bowl. Place cut-side down on a large baking sheet. Roast until tender and golden, about 15 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, combine vinegar, shallot, capers, pepper and the remaining ¼ teaspoon salt in a large bowl. Whisk in the remaining 3 tablespoons oil.

4. Reserve 2 tablespoons of the dressing in a small bowl. Add frisée (or endive) to the large bowl and toss to coat. Transfer to a large serving platter. Toss the roasted potatoes, parsley and olives with the reserved 2 tablespoons dressing. Serve on top of the greens.

SERVES 8: ABOUT 1½ CUPS EACH

Calories 163, Fat 9g (sat 1g), Cholesterol 0mg, Carbs 18g, Total sugars 1g (added 0g), Protein 2g, Fiber 4g, Sodium 239mg, Potassium 457mg.

Rutabaga Puree with Goat Cheese & Rosemary

ACTIVE: 15 MIN **TOTAL:** 30 MIN

Buttery rutabaga and creamy goat cheese team up in this tasty alternative to mashed potatoes. Rutabaga is usually coated with a layer of wax to prolong storage; if you can find it unwaxed, go for that instead—it's easier to prep and often has a better flavor. (Photo: page 82.)

- 2 pounds rutabaga (about 1 very large)
- ¾ cup low-fat milk
- ½ cup crumbled soft goat cheese
- 2 tablespoons butter, cut into small pieces
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary *or* ½ teaspoon dried, plus more for garnish
- ¾ teaspoon salt

1. Cut off the bottom of the rutabaga so it has a flat base to keep it steady. Then cut off the skin with a sharp knife, following the contour of the root. Cut the flesh into ½-inch pieces.

2. Bring an inch of water to a boil in a large pot fitted with a steamer basket. Add the rutabaga, cover, and steam until tender, 12 to 15 minutes.

3. Transfer the rutabaga to a food processor. Add milk, goat cheese, butter, rosemary and salt and puree until very smooth, scraping down the sides of the bowl as necessary. Transfer to a serving dish. Garnish with fresh rosemary, if desired.

SERVES 6: ⅔ CUP EACH

Calories 119, Fat 6g (sat 4g), Cholesterol 16mg, Carbs 13g, Total sugars 7g (added 0g), Protein 4g, Fiber 3g, Sodium 355mg, Potassium 442mg.

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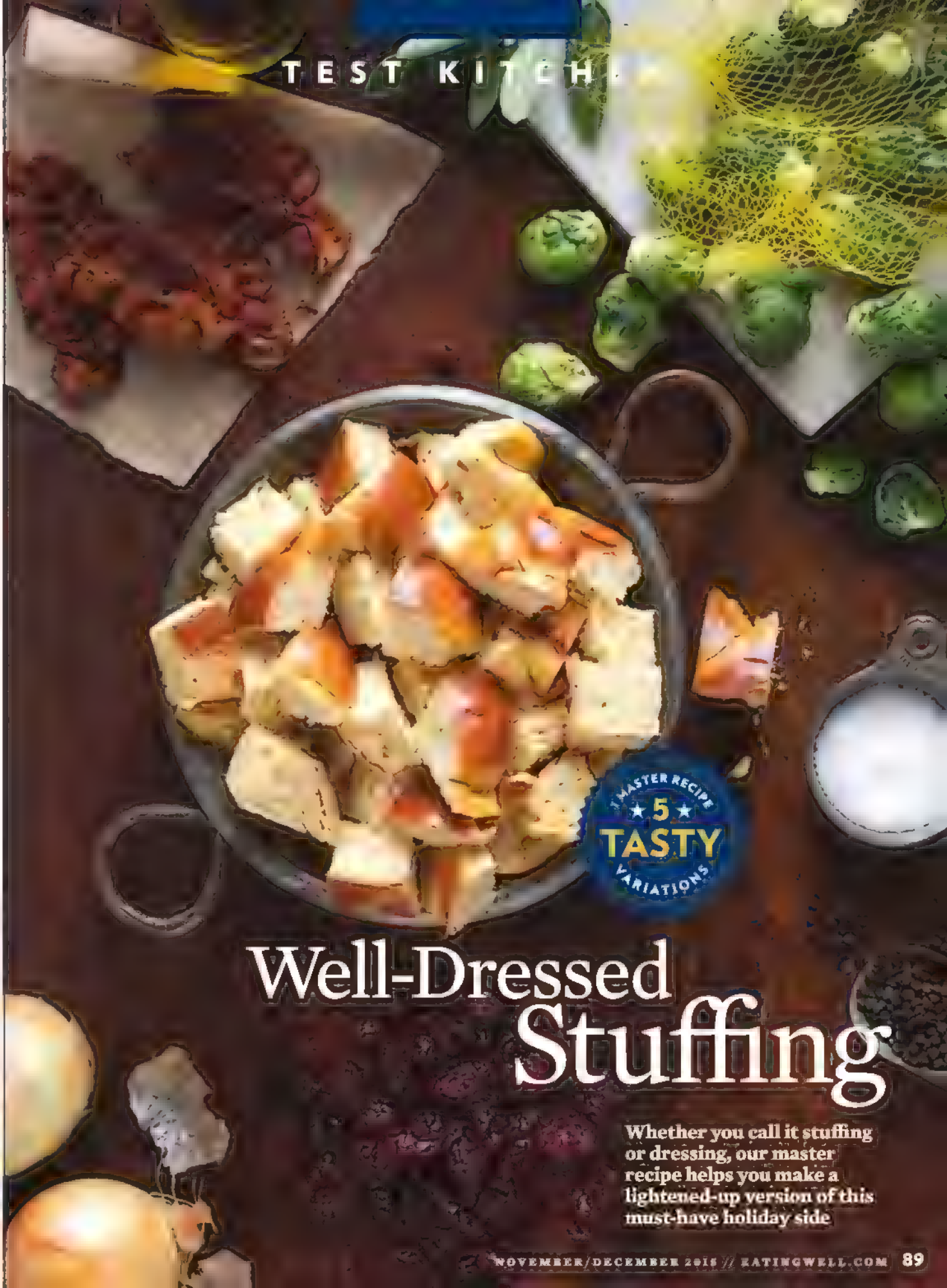

Well-Dressed Stuffing

Whether you call it stuffing or dressing, our master recipe helps you make a lightened-up version of this must-have holiday side

ANDREW SCRIVANI STYLING: ELLIE ARPTICAN FOOD: SOO JEONG KANG PROPS:

Save Room for *This!*

There's more than one way to make a better stuffing. These five had us coming back for seconds, but to truly make it your own, mix-and-match your favorites at each step.

1 Start with dry (not stale) bread

Dry bread (almost as dry as croutons) absorbs liquid and seasoning better than fresh (or even stale). To dry out your bread: Spread 10 cups ½- to 1-inch bread cubes (from 1-1½ pounds) on a large rimmed baking sheet. Bake at 275°F until dry to the touch, about 30 minutes. Let cool; transfer to a large bowl.

BREADS:

- Challah
- Cornbread
- French
- Italian
- Multigrain
- Pumpernickel
- Rye
- Sourdough
- Whole-wheat

2 Load up on veg or fruit

A base of sautéed vegetables makes the best stuffing: Heat 2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add 2 cups chopped onions (or leeks) and 2 cups chopped vegetables *and/or* fruit; cook, stirring, until starting to brown, 3 to 5 minutes. Reduce heat to medium and cook, stirring, until tender, 3 to 5 minutes more. Add 2 minced cloves garlic and cook for 30 seconds.

VEGETABLES/FRUITS:

- Apples
- Brussels sprouts
- Celery
- Chestnuts
- Fennel
- Mushrooms
- Pears
- Shallots
- Winter squash

3 Bring on the seasoning

Once your flavor base is ready, it's time add a layer of seasoning from fresh (or dried) herbs and a touch of decadence with a little butter: Add ¼ cup chopped fresh herbs (*or* 4 tsp. dried) to the skillet and cook, stirring, for 30 seconds more. Scrape the mixture on top of the bread. Melt 4 Tbsp. butter in the hot pan, scraping up any browned bits. Scrape that into the bowl and sprinkle with ½ tsp. pepper.

HERBS:

- Marjoram
- Parsley
- Rosemary
- Sage
- Savory
- Thyme

4 Make it moist...or not

Pour on some broth to moisten it all up—how much you use depends on how you like your stuffing. If you're a super-moist-stuffing lover, go for 3 cups broth. If you like your stuffing a little bit squishy and a little bit crispy, stick to about 2 cups broth. Either way, use low-sodium broth (or homemade stock) so the stuffing's not too salty.

BROTHS:

- Chicken
- Turkey
- Mushroom
- Vegetable
- Seafood

BONUS RECIPES! For more favorite holiday stuffing recipes, go to eatingwell.com/webextra

5 Add a little indulgence

Sprinkle in just enough extra-special ingredients to flavor the stuffing without tipping the calories overboard—about 1 cup total does the job nicely. Gently stir until the bread is evenly soaked with the broth and the ingredients are well distributed.

SPECIAL BITS:

- Bacon, pancetta or prosciutto, cooked
- Cheese, shredded
- Dried fruit, chopped if large
- Nuts, toasted, chopped
- Oysters, raw, halved
- Sauerkraut, chopped
- Sausage, cooked, crumbled

6 Bake it just right

Coat a 9-by-13-inch baking dish with cooking spray; transfer the stuffing to the pan. Coat one side of a piece of foil with cooking spray; cover the stuffing, sprayed-side down. Place in a 350°F oven. If you're the extra-moist-stuffing type, bake covered for 50 minutes. If you like some crispy bits on top, bake covered for 30 minutes, then uncover and bake about 20 minutes more

ACTIVE: 40 min
TOTAL: 1½ hrs
YIELD: 10 servings, ¾ cup each
NUTRITION INFO: Page 94

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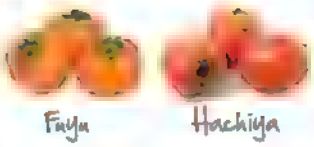


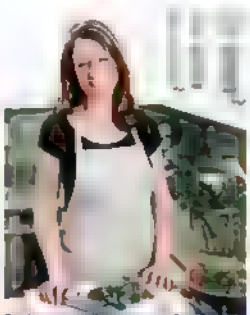
Persimmons 101: Two types are available during the fall and winter. Flat-bottomed Fuyus are bright orange and the texture of an almost-ripe peach when ready to eat—perfect for salsas and salads (try them in the wild rice & baby kale salad, page 72), with or without the peel. Oval-shaped, darker orange and larger Hachiyas are only edible when almost liquid on the inside. The cinnamon-apricot-flavored flesh is used in baking or can be scooped out of the skin and eaten like custard. Underripe, they are off-puttingly tart. Both types take several days to ripen at room temperature.

Use **nonreactive** bowls or pans (*page 80*)—stainless-steel, enamel-coated, nonstick or glass—when cooking with acidic foods (citrus, berries, tomatoes) to prevent the food from reacting with the dish. Reactive cookware (aluminum and cast-iron) can impart off colors and/or flavors.

Heart-healthy **avocado oil** (*page 46*) has a subtle buttery flavor. It's great for high-heat cooking, like oven-frying and sautéing, and tasty in salad dressings—and we love the convenience of it in a spray bottle.

Oat flour (*page 62*) is made from finely milled whole oats. Try it in place of a portion of other flour in pancakes or muffins. Look for it with other whole-grain or gluten-free flours. To make your own, grind oats in a blender or food processor until they're the texture of flour.

Brûléed banana slices—sliced banana with a layer of caramelized sugar—make our banana pudding parfaits (*page 80*) extra-special for barely any extra calories. To make them, you'll need a small k tchen torch. Sprinkle a slice of banana with ½ tsp. granulated sugar. Holding the flame 1 to 2 inches away, heat the sugar until it melts and browns. Let stand until crisp and cool.



Send your cooking questions to Test Kitchen Manager Stacy Fraser at askus@eatingwell.com

Do I really need to preheat my oven?

—L. MILLER, MADISON, W

The moment you turn your oven on, it starts getting hot, but most take a full 20 minutes to be fully preheated—even if the indicator light (or chime) says it's ready sooner.

The indicator signals when the air in the oven is hot enough, but for it to be well heated, the walls also need to be hot. If they're not, most of the heat in the oven escapes when you open the door. Put in a chicken in to roast in a cool oven and it starts steaming instead of roasting. In the end, you might find yourself with a dry chicken because it lost too much moisture during the first few minutes in the oven. Plus, without enough heat to activate the chemical reaction of cooking (the Maillard reaction), that chicken just won't brown properly or develop the rich flavor that makes it taste so good. A "too cool" oven isn't the only reason to wait—if you rush, it might actually be too hot. When an electric element is heating, it's often super-hot. Put in a batch of cookies while it's heating and the bottoms will burn.

Most recipes instruct you to turn the oven on before starting any prep, unless they have long marinating or chilling times. If you get into that habit, your oven will almost always be evenly heated by the time you're ready to use it.

The best way to know if your oven's at the right temp is to check it with an oven thermometer. If it's not right after about 20 minutes, check the manual—calibrating it is usually easy to do without a call to the repair guy.

EDITOR'S PICK: "These two cookbooks are great gifts. Nancy Harmon Jenkins's *The Four Seasons of Pasta*, written with her daughter, chef Sara Jenkins, is full of recipes I'll be making for years. My sis (and *EatingWell* contributor) Katie Webster created all the recipes and took the photos for her first book, *Maple*. Couldn't be more proud of her!"—*Jessie Price, Editor-in-Chief*

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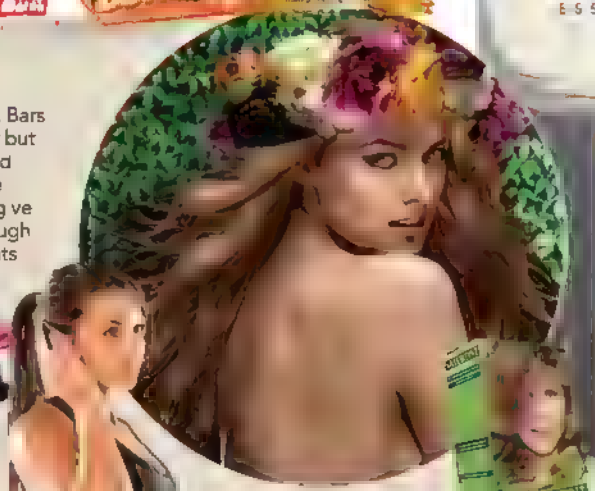

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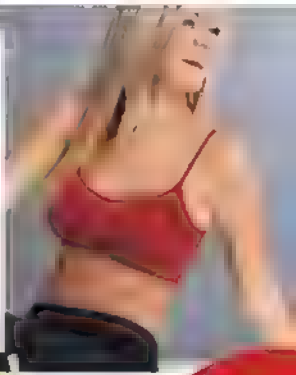

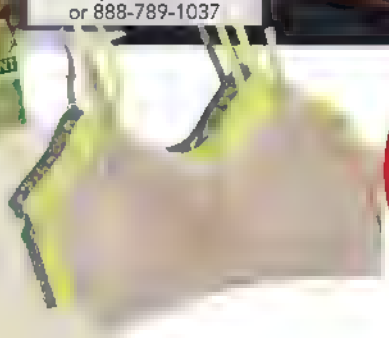

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DIY Spice Mixes PAGE 8

RECIPE & NUTRITION INDEX

		45 MIN OR LESS	BUDGET	CALORIES	FAT/SAT (g)	CARBS (g)	FIBER (g)	SODIUM (mg)	LOW-CAL	HEART-HEALTHY	VEGETARIAN	VEGAN	GLUTEN-FREE	DAILY VALUE (15%+) CALCIUM	FOLATE	IRON	VITAMIN A	VITAMIN B_{12}	VITAMIN C
BREAKFAST																			
71	Savory Pancakes with Sausage, Cheddar & Wild Rice		■	286	12/4	34	4	515	■					24		26			
APPETIZERS & DRINKS																			
40	Pear & Camembert Crostini	■		90	2/1	15	2	159			■								
42	Pear Pecan Cheese Ball			63	5/3	2	0	117			■		■						
40	Pear Rum Punch			166	0/0	18	2	4			■	■	■						
SALADS																			
58	Burnt Orange & Escarole Salad	■	■	121	8/1	13	3	112	■	■	■		■		27		30		39
86	Frisée & Fingerling Potato Salad	■	■	163	9/1	18	4	239	■	■	■	■	■		22		32		28
42	Warm Pear & Spinach Salad with Maple Bacon Vinaigrette	■		194	13/2	16	4	261	■	■			■		41		141		40
72	Wild Rice & Baby Kale Salad with Persimmons			248	10/1	39	4	302	■	■	■	■	■				56		49
SIDES																			
59	Beer Braised Cipolline Onions		■	81	3/1	10	1	102	■	■	■								
84	Garlic-Parmesan Roasted Brussels Sprouts	■	■	204	15/3	14	5	304	■		■		■		26		27		176
61	Glazed Roasted Delicata Squash		■	164	6/1	30	3	116	■	■	■		■						29
86	Green Beans & Pancetta with Whole-Grain Mustard Dressing	■	■	81	4/1	9	3	358	■	■			■				16		24
84	Jalapeño Cranberry Relish	■	■	85	4/1	14	2	19	■	■	■	■	■						
56	Polenta-Stuffed Kabocha Squash			203	13/6	16	3	313	■		■		■	17			33		
86	Roasted Rainbow Carrots with Sage Brown Butter	■	■	121	8/4	13	4	384	■		■		■				453		
86	Rutabaga Puree with Goat Cheese & Rosemary	■	■	119	6/4	13	3	355	■		■		■						54
60	Sautéed Broccoli & Kale with Toasted Garlic Butter	■	■	105	7/3	9	3	187	■	■	■		■		17		159		224
STUFFING																			
90	Apple-Sauerkraut Stuffing		■	201	11/5	22	3	229	■										
91	Brussels Sprouts & Bacon Stuffing		■	252	12/5	31	2	235						24	16				
91	Mushroom-Cornbread Stuffing		■	325	20/5	31	4	390	■										
91	Sausage-Chestnut Stuffing		■	274	11/4	32	5	311											
90	Squash & Oyster Stuffing		■	235	9/4	31	2	271	■						21	20	41	37	
VEGETARIAN																			
37	Cauliflower & Kale Frittata	■	■	324	22/7	13	3	555	■		■		■	25	27	20	185	15	214
70	Fennel & Asiago Pie with a Wild Rice Crust		■	324	16/5	30	5	462	■		■		■	23	18				18
70	Wild Rice & Mushroom Soup		■	309	13/3	39	5	566	■	■	■		■		28		34		20
FISH																			
50	Gochujang-Glazed Cod & Broccolini Packets	■		298	7/1	33	3	628	■	■							25	38	98
46	Manhattan Cod Chowder	■		226	6/1	24	4	555	■	■			■			18		30	34
46	Parmesan-Crusted Cod with Tartar Sauce	■		255	9/2	16	1	482	■	■								44	
48	Seared Cod with Spinach-Lemon Sauce	■		163	7/1	4	2	393	■	■			■		23		80	38	41
CHICKEN & TURKEY																			
57	Herb-Roasted Turkey with Calvados Gravy		■	213	7/3	3	0	436	■	■								15	
34	Middle Eastern Chicken & Chickpea Stew	■	■	268	8/1	22	5	613	■	■			■			16	15		40
BEEF & PORK																			
32	Cornbread-Topped Chili Casserole	■	■	491	21/4	55	8	670		■			■	18	18	25	38		42
30	Corned Beef Latkes	■	■	391	24/6	33	2	633								16			
58	Fresh Ham with Red Pepper Glaze			215	5/2	9	0	536	■	■			■						
30	Steak with Glazed Carrots & Turnips	■		328	15/5	25	5	639	■	■			■				381	21	51
DESSERTS																			
80	Banana Cream Pudding Parfait			348	18/6	41	3	100					■	19					
77	Clementine & Cocoa Nib Meringues		■	25	0/0	5	0	8			■		■						
80	Eggnog Pie with Cranberry Sauce		■	355	14/7	51	1	195			■								
62	Pumpkin Tart with Pecan Shortbread Crust		■	365	26/10	30	3	230			■						121		
78	Vanilla Marshmallows *(+ Gingerbread and Cherry variations)*		■	57	0/0	14	0	12					■						

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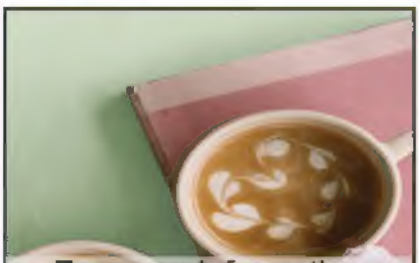
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Cheers to the Burrito Brigade! Lily Frey, Christy Reynolds, Chuck Denson and Jennifer Rieh! *(pictured from left)* have joined Burrito Brigade founder Heather Beck *(right)* in the fight against hunger in Eugene, Oregon.

Wrapping Up Hunger

In Oregon, this group is making a difference one vegan burrito at a time. By Jackie Varriano

WHO THEY ARE Heather Beck has always been passionate about sustainability so in 2013 she moved from Los Angeles to Eugene, Oregon, to work for a company that designs, sells and manufactures municipal recycling systems. But outside of work, she was looking for a way to get more involved in her new community. After witnessing the amount of food scraps being composted in the Willamette Valley and seeing the growing homeless population in Eugene, a lightbulb went off. "I knew that food scarcity was not the issue here, rather inadequate food distribution systems," she says. A firm believer in grassroots solutions, one rainy March day Beck posted a status update on Facebook asking friends to help her feed the hungry.

WHAT THEY'RE DOING Two days later, Beck and two friends, CJ Meyers and Sean Reber, assembled 40 vegan burritos and hit the streets to hand them out to the homeless and hungry. Now, almost two years and thousands of burritos later, they're called Burrito Brigade. Every Sunday a crew of up to 25 volunteers gather to turn donated food (they only buy the tortillas) into as many as 500 burritos filled with beans, lentils, rice and vegetables. The burritos are vegan to appeal to as many dietary needs as possible while stretching the shelf life for people with no access to refrigeration. Burritos are handed out at shelters, camps and parks in Eugene and neighboring Springfield, with no strings attached. If you're hungry, you get a burrito, it's as simple as that.

WHY IT'S COOL Since the group so quickly picked up steam, additional organizers (*above*) have joined the Brigade's ranks. Getting approved as an official nonprofit has raised their profile and strengthened community support. People they have fed have come back as volunteers, and Meyers and Reber are starting their own Burrito Brigades in Northampton, Massachusetts, and Seattle respectively. "Everyone's story with Burrito Brigade is so different, it's cool how it impacts everyone's life," says Beck. Stephanie Bashein Emerson, who has been volunteering with the group for more than a year, says, "The fact that I'm involved in something that directly helps my community is why I keep coming back. That's the beauty of it."

GET INVOLVED Find out how to volunteer and donate at *burrito-brigade.org*

AMIRAN WHITE

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